

Chronicles

February 2004

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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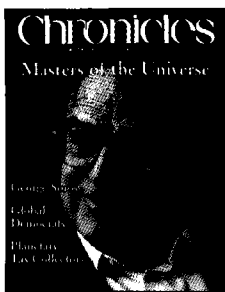
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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Guns and Rights

While I entirely agree with Roger McGrath's contention in his essay in defense of gun rights ("A God-Given Natural Right," *Views*, October 2003) that "an armed citizenry is essential to the preservation of freedom and democracy," I do not agree that "the Second Amendment, like the First, recognizes a God-given, natural right of the people" to keep and bear arms. Rather, it codified an ancestral and customary right that belonged to Americans by virtue of their colonial charters and former status as British subjects. Americans have a constitutional right to gun ownership, just as they have a constitutional right to vote. They have no natural right to these, however, as no such right exists.

Burke denounced "the rights of man" as a "metaphysical doctrine" that "exposed the sure inheritance" of his countrymen to the winds of philosophic speculation. He much preferred to speak of "the rights of Englishmen" and the rights of "civil social man," which are "to be settled by convention." "As liberties and restrictions vary with time and circumstances and admit to infinite modifications, they cannot be settled upon any abstract rule."

The Christian writer Simone Weil believed that the doctrine of natural rights originated with pagan Rome, was "alien to the Greek mind," faded during the Christian Middle Ages, and was sadly revived by the materialist French Enlightenment. According to her, both Greeks and Christians were content with the concept of justice. How true her insight that invocations of one's rights "evoke a latent war and awaken the spirit of contention," destroying the possibility of charity and consensus.

To demand one's absolute rights is to stand with Robespierre and his modern heirs. Loyal sons of the West, such as Dr. McGrath, should not make this same error.

—H.A. Scott Trask
Chesterfield, MO

I entirely agree with the moral substance of Dr. McGrath's spirited defense of the right to bear arms. He makes the impor-

tant point—often missed in the debate over gun control—that the right to bear arms is not granted by government but is assumed by the Constitution to be pre-existent. The Constitution merely prohibits government from "infringing" the right. A dissonance in thought occurs, however, when Dr. McGrath goes on to call this a "God-given natural right." The ancient Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, and the medievales had no language for the Enlightenment concept of natural rights. The modern idea of natural rights is the idea of abstract rights enjoyed independent of historic experience in political society. Indeed, political society is said to be instituted to protect these abstract rights. This, however, is to get things backward. Rights exist because they serve the human good. We learn what rights there are and ought to be through seeking to live out a good and noble human life in political society with others. There are no rights independent of our experience. Dr. McGrath includes freedom of the press as one of those natural rights that is not to be compromised by political society. The right to a free press, however, cannot be conceived independent of political society. There can be no free press without the invention of the press, and that necessarily takes place in political society. A free press, like free speech, is not a timeless abstract natural right but a good that has been learned and tested through experience in political society—and a certain *kind* of political society at that. For example, the right of free speech becomes important only in a literate society that values an ethic of individualism and the public expression of thought, and where such expression can be dangerous to authority. In a simple tribal society where few people have anything of importance to say, the "infringement" of free speech would not be thought of, and the need for the right would not exist.

This is not a philosophical quibble. To declare an abstract right as a God-given absolute (meaning, of course, Nature's God, not the God of the Bible) cuts off all inquiry into the concrete reasons for the right, preventing us from having a connoisseur's grasp of why the right is necessary and from mounting a persuasive defense of it grounded in experience.

—Donald W. Livingston
Atlanta, GA

Dr. McGrath Replies:

Scott Trask and Don Livingston are civilized and learned gentlemen in the great Western tradition. I share in that tradition and appreciate the debt we owe to the Church in the Middle Ages and to ancient Greece and Rome. However, I have a bit of the barbarian left in me. For my ancestral folks, the Disaster of the Allia was no disaster. The lads had a good day. This is probably why, long ago, I was seduced by the opening paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence and believe that all men are “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

We can argue about John Locke, or Thomas Jefferson’s interpretation of Locke, or the Enlightenment in general, but I suspect that ultimately we will have to agree to disagree. If the most basic of all rights—the right to life—is a creation of a political society and not the Creator, then all rights are simply artificial constructs of particular societies, times, and places. The latter is certainly true for derivative rights, as delineated in the Bill of Rights, such as the right to legal counsel in a criminal prosecution, but the first ten amendments also recognize inherent rights, those unalienable rights, such as the right to bear arms, that “shall not be infringed.” The right to bear arms is simply another way of saying that man has the right of self-defense. This was not something that had to be learned in any kind of politically organized and sophisticated society. The will to live, an instinct for survival, is basic to all living organisms. This was around long before governments were organized. Those Celtic tribesmen who crushed the Roman army at the Allia River had little government but lots of swords. Every warrior understood that a fine blade was his birthright. It was only when governments were established and became concerned with establishing a monopoly of force that warriors began to be disarmed. The Founding Fathers understood this.

I suspect Trask and Livingston will join me in keeping our powder dry and our barrels swabbed. Now—breathe, relax, aim, slack, squeeze.

On Cleveland

I am sure that Scott P. Richert, in his re-

view of Bill Kauffman’s *Dispatches From the Muckdog Gazette* (“Ain’t Goin’ Nowhere,” *Reviews*, November 2003), did not intend to single out my hometown as the standard for the corporate homogenization of America; since he did, however, let me say that I also like Cleveland. This is not to deny that it suffers from the plagues that he mentions—the proliferation of chain restaurants and big-box stores—as well as a host of other problems, such as stupid, corrupt, and evil politicians; businessmen with no loyalty; deteriorating, crime-infested neighborhoods; rotten schools; and citizens who seemingly only like to complain and to dream about moving to a warmer climate. I hardly think that Cleveland is unique in these regards, however; in fact, it probably retains more of its old character than many Sunbelt cities do.

I lived in the heart of the industrial armpit on the near east side for the better part of my life, long past the time when it was a decent place to raise a family. What happened to that neighborhood and so many others in the city and throughout America is a national tragedy. Without this collapse, there would have been no “need” for new-and-improved Clevelands, Pittsburghs, and Detroit.

The road back, as Mr. Richert has written so often, lies with persuading people to frequent local businesses as often as possible, to take greater interest in neighborhood and regional affairs, and, most importantly, to stay put. Communities cannot be sustained by people unwilling to put down permanent roots.

For the record, I have not heard any objections in Cleveland to letting Rockford be Rockford.

—Anthony J. Wawrzynski
Cleveland, OH

Chronicles is my favorite magazine, and Scott Richert is an excellent editor. So I really cannot explain how my November issue came to contain these lines, reputedly from Mr. Richert’s pen, referring to Cleveland as “the old industrial armpit of the Midwest that repeatedly managed the miraculous feats of turning Cuyahoga River water into fire and reducing the multitude of fish in Lake Erie to none.” Maybe there are bugs in the Mac that Apple doesn’t want us to know about, because such sentiments seem more in keeping with the disdain for the real America I’ve heard from self-styled champions of Silicon Valley than what

I’ve come to expect from *Chronicles*.

The old Cleveland was never an “arm-pit” but a vibrant place, from the cultural wonders of University Circle (including an unsurpassed orchestra) to the strong faith and rich traditions brought here by the many immigrants who came at the turn of the last century to work in the many factories and foundries of industrial Cleveland. As a matter of fact, the water of the Cuyahoga did not repeatedly burn—though oil spilled there did burn in 1952 and again in 1969—and Lake Erie remained a very productive commercial fishery even at its nadir, producing some ten million pounds of fish in 1971, second only to Michigan among the Great Lakes and easily exceeding Michigan in fish caught per cubic yard of water. Each Christmas Eve, we ate the delicious perch and walleye caught by my uncle in Lake Erie, a marked improvement on the carp traditionally consumed by my Polish and Slovak forebears as part of their Christmas Eve dinners.

It is true that the much publicized Cleveland revival of the 1990’s does not quite live up to the hype, primarily because of the disastrous impact of free trade on industrial America. But we still have an outstanding orchestra, great museums, wonderful parks, and great Central European food of the type found in too few American cities—all of which is a legacy of industrial Cleveland.

—Tom Piatak
Cleveland, OH

Mr. Richert Replies:

I know that my friends Tony Wawrzynski and Tom Piatak took my chauvinistic remarks (the product of a youth on the shores of Lake Michigan) in the good humor in which they were intended. Truth be told, Rockford is a better poster child for the corporate homogenization of America—all of our “growth” for two decades has occurred on the East State Street strip of chain restaurants and big-box stores. And we have little left of the legacy of industrial Rockford—as in Bill Kauffman’s *Batavia*, most of what the industrialists built was destroyed by Republican politicians in the 1960’s, and the rest has suffered neglect, as the grandsons of those industrialists sold their family businesses to multinational corporations. Now, it may be too late for Rockford; let’s hope it’s not for Cleveland.

The Dean Delusion

What is wrong with Howard Dean? Not much, if you listen to many Republicans and some conservatives. Republicans are salivating over the prospect of a Dean nomination because it seems to be the best way to ensure that President Bush stays where he is. Some conservatives, however, are saying that they may vote for the ex-governor of Vermont simply because they dislike George W. Bush so much and because Mr. Dean seems to be the man most likely to rid the federal government and the world of the present resident of the White House.

Both reactions are understandable but flawed. The first reveals the naked partisanship that now masquerades as "conservatism." "Please nominate this man," pleaded the title of a recent article about Mr. Dean by Rich Lowry in *National Review*, the semi-official journal of the Republican Party and the Bush White House. The second reaction is also flawed, because it narrowly obsesses on a single issue, a bad habit that has plagued the American right for decades.

The single issue in this case is the war with Iraq. President Bush dragged this country into it for no good reason. The reasons he and his administration offered for the war have turned out to be without foundation and may well have been outright lies. Several in the Bush foreign-policy team may be reasonably suspected of manipulating U.S. policy on behalf of a foreign power whose interests are not those of this nation. Several others in the administration may be reasonably suspected of conflicts of personal financial interests in the foreign and military policies they have pushed. The President himself may be reasonably suspected of being incompetent.

All those are good reasons for wishing the current administration to be out of office, but none of them should lead any serious conservative or any other sensible and patriotic American to support Mr. Dean. It is true, as he and his campaign love to repeat incessantly, that, of all the Democratic contenders, he has been the most consistent, opposing the disastrous Iraq intervention from the first. The larger and more important truth, however, is that Mr. Dean does not support a for-

eign policy grounded in the just interests of the United States. He supported both the first Gulf War in 1991 and the U.S. intervention in the Balkans, a crusade no more necessary to our interests and no less disastrous to the people and region it ostensibly sought to help than what we have done and are doing in Iraq.

Moreover, while Mr. Dean's views on the current war are (sort of) the same as those of most anti-interventionist conservatives, his views on virtually everything else are those of the left-liberalism from which he emerges. His tax plan proposes exorbitant and ruinous levels of taxation and spending that merely enhance the powers of the federal leviathan to Himalayan heights. His support for homosexual marriage and his record in supporting "gay civil unions" in Vermont when governor are morally and constitutionally repellent. His position on mass immigration—like every other Democratic candidate, he supports total amnesty for all illegal aliens and offers no change of any kind on immigration law and policy—is suicidal.

Mr. Dean's recent remarks about the need for the Democrats to gain the support of "guys with Confederate flags in their pick-up trucks" should not be interpreted by real conservatives as betraying any genuine sympathy for such strata of American society. Mr. Dean, being the clever politician he is, merely understands the need for the Democrats to regain the votes of white middle- and working-class voters that they have lost through 40 years or more of support for cultural revolution. To this end, he has recently been banging the religious drums in preparation for his campaign in the South, in the belief that white Southerners are dumb enough to give their votes to a man who has steadily shunned any public discussion of religion throughout his career.

But his main stratagem for winning what neoconservative Charles Krauthammer calls the "white trash vote" (i.e., the middle-class and working-class whites whom people such as Krauthammer hate) is to play to such voters' greed and to nurture among them the delusion that the federal government should give them something for nothing. Indeed, that tac-

tic used to work well for the Democrats among just such voters, but it may have exhausted its possibilities and, in any case, is now regularly exploited by the Republicans just as shamelessly.

What the Democrats need to do is abandon the cultural warfare and revolution they have practiced for decades, dump their allies in the Dominant Culture of Hollywood and Manhattan, and seriously align themselves with the real cultural mainstream of the country. Whenever Democratic candidates have effectively pretended to do that—Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton—they have done well and are able to compete with Republican candidates who make the same pretense—Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush. It's just that, in this respect, the Republicans have for once pretended more persuasively than their rivals.

It seems unlikely that either party this year will nominate any candidate for whom authentic conservatives can vote enthusiastically, and there is no reason that this should be surprising. Real conservatives—those who defend the real traditions and identity of their nation's people and civilization and their real interests abroad—can debate among themselves which alternative candidates and parties, if any, they should support, but they need to avoid being deluded by such fake conservatives on the "right" as George W. Bush and by their no-less-fraudulent rivals on the "left" who make appealing noises about one or two issues. A real and serious conservatism can advance only if those who espouse it articulate a complete vision of what their country and civilization have been and should be. There's no evidence that either Howard Dean or any other major figure in today's political theater does so or is capable of doing so. <C

Save a Stamp!

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RUSSIA'S PARLIAMENTARY elections, held December 7, produced a wave of alarmed reactions in the Western press that betray the ignorance and hypocrisy of Western elite thinking regarding Russia and the West's—particularly Washington's—relations with Moscow.

The Kremlin-backed United Russia party carried the day, winning nearly 38 percent of the vote, while other Kremlin-backed—or created—parties (the Liberal Democratic Party of “ultranationalist” Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and the “left nationalist” Rodina bloc) took another 20 percent. The Communists (KPRF), who had made the grave error of accepting financing from imprisoned oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky, and the two pro-Western “liberal” parties—Yabloko and the Union of Right Forces (SPS), which had also defended “Khodor” (whose Yukos oil firm is under attack by the general prosecutor's office)—were undermined by their own incompetent campaigns as well as the authorities' skillful use of “administrative resources” (including, probably, election fraud) to ensure the desired election results. The KPRF received about 13 percent of the vote, while neither Yabloko nor SPS crossed the five-percent threshold for representation in the Russian parliament.

The *Washington Post* whined that Vladimir Putin's Kremlin was undermining the progress Boris Yeltsin had supposedly made in moving Russia toward “Western norms and human rights.” Putin, it seems, was intent on “suppressing” a “more liberal and democratic” Russia that the *Post* thinks existed under Yeltsin. The United States, according to the *Post*, should support programs designed to “foster . . . an independent civil society and free media” in Russia. Others claimed the election results showed the triumph of authoritarian “Putinism” in the Land of the Firebird: Pentagon advisor Richard Perle and Republican Sen. John McCain, among others, have called for Russia to be kicked out of the Group of Eight in view of what McCain called a “creeping coup” against democracy and “market capitalism” in Russia (a reference to Khodorkovsky's arrest). Most critics were also alarmed by the successful exploitation of nationalist themes during the campaign.

The election results were, indeed, a

triumph for what Russians have called “managed democracy.” It is also true, however, that Kremlin “political technologists” began cooking up a plan for managing what passed for democracy under Yeltsin, a period that saw a legally elected parliament shelled into submission by “Czar Boris” in 1993. As Yeltsin's retirement approached in the late 90's, the “family,” Yeltsin's entourage, began testing plans for staging a “controlled reaction” that would harness and channel the country's yearning for order as well as the growing nationalist mood in ways that would stabilize the postcommunist system (“the oligarchy”) and guarantee the safety of key family members. Following the success of populist retired Gen. Aleksandr Lebed in the 1996 elections (he won 15 percent of the vote, siphoning voters away from Yeltsin's KPRF rival), the family began a search for a reliable Yeltsin successor in the military and security agencies; Yeltsin stressed “patriotic” themes, especially in foreign policy; and the Kremlin made plans to manipulate the anti-oligarch mood.

These plans were fulfilled when ex-KGB officer Putin, whom Yeltsin appointed prime minister in 1999, was elected president in 2000. Thereafter, the Kremlin backed legislation protecting Yeltsin and his relatives. Eventually, particularly obnoxious oligarchs Vladimir Gusinsky and Boris Berezovsky, who had fallen out with the family, were driven from Russia, and their assets were largely redistributed to more reliable Kremlin partners. Both moves proved wildly popular with the Russian public and helped bolster Putin's poll numbers. The “controlled reaction” scenario had worked like a charm—which is why the Kremlin made use of it again during the recent campaign, with Khodorkovsky serving as the oligarch victim and the Kremlin-backed parties adopting an anti-oligarch campaign line.

Thus, it is more correct to say that the recent elections signal the triumph of Yeltsinism rather than that of Putinism. And the West has again shown its penchant for hypocrisy and utter ignorance of foreign cultures. While Yeltsin was making the right “democratic” noises and literally blasting the “red-brown” coalition of Communists and nationalists who opposed his “shock therapy” economic pro-

gram—even as Western, especially U.S., “consultants” and Yeltsin's cronies lined their pockets—the usual Western media suspects were singing his praises. Sensible alternatives to Yeltsinism offered by patriotic Russians were ignored. Had those alternative programs—more gradualist in nature and more in keeping with Russian sensibilities—been implemented, Russia may not have been a democracy or a model of free-market economics in the West's eyes, but she might have been a better place.

In a note appearing recently on *Johnson's Russia List* (www.cdi.org/russia/johnson), Sharon Tennison, who has conducted research on Russian voter preferences, had some commonsense advice for Western elites: “It's both arrogant and dangerous for the West to stand back and continually cast stones . . . at Russia . . . We can't change them. Our taunts can only belittle, irritate and distance them . . . It's too dangerous to go there again. We need to stop it now, in the early stages, and find more constructive ways to deal with the reality that exists.” If such advice had been heeded in the 1990's, Russia, and Russia-U.S. relations, might be better off.

—Wayne Allensworth

THE STEEL TARIFF may become a major issue in this year's presidential campaign, placing Howard Dean in the odd position (for a Democratic candidate, at least) of attacking President Bush for caving in to a decision of an international body—in this case, the World Trade Organization. But then, over its 21-month life, this tariff has made for some rather strange bedfellows.

For instance, many libertarians—not usually fans of the WTO, which they generally regard as restricting free trade rather than facilitating it—applauded the trade agency's action, even though it trampled on U.S. sovereignty by striking down a constitutionally enacted tax. The Constitution is a document to be revered—except, it seems, when it allows things that violate libertarian principles.

The protectionist right, of course, took the opposite view, praising Bush when he imposed the tariff on European, Asian, and South American steel in March 2002 and damning the administration for back-

ing down in December in the wake of threats by the European Union to impose retaliatory sanctions on American products if Bush chose not to abide by the WTO's decision. While right on the sovereignty question—the very fact that an international agency demanded the tariff be removed was almost reason enough to retain it—these commentators are as dogmatic as the libertarians, endorsing protectionism on principle without considering the consequences of any particular tariff in the light of the national interest.

In this case, those consequences have been nearly disastrous for the small manufacturers of America, upon whom—for a little while longer, at least, until the libertarians have their way—the U.S. economy still rests.

Back in the 1980's, when Ronald Reagan imposed tariffs on steel from Asian countries that were dumping below cost into the American market, U.S. firms still produced most of the steel necessary to meet domestic demand. With the Cold War still raging, the tariffs served not only the interests of the American economy but of national security. Today, the national-security interests are no less great, but, in the wake of the Bush I-Clinton-Bush II NAFTA-GATT free-trade push, domestic manufacturers no longer come close to meeting the demands of U.S. businesses for steel. Small manufacturers, such as those struggling to survive here in Rockford, have been forced to rely on imported steel—not to lower the costs of production but simply to meet demand. It is not an exaggeration to say that no small business owner here in Rockford would choose to import steel if he could rely on domestic steel instead, even at a slightly higher price. Unlike the CEO's of multinational corporations, who can't see beyond the next quarterly profit and loss statement, or politicians, who are simply focused on the next election, most owners of small manufacturing firms understand that the health of the American economy—and the health of their local economies—depends upon a certain degree of self-sufficiency. The domestic supply, however, simply isn't enough. Thus, the Bush tariff has increased their companies' costs and decreased their ability to compete—not just in the “global marketplace” but in the domestic market.

It didn't have to be that way. Unlike previous tariffs, which imposed surcharges on both raw materials and finished

products made from those materials, the Bush tariff—the result of intense lobbying by large, politically connected steel corporations, not small manufacturing concerns—left the price of finished products untouched. Thus, companies such as Rockford Acromatic—a producer of after-market automobile parts—found that Chinese companies could often export finished goods to the United States more cheaply than U.S. companies could purchase imported steel to make competing products. The result has been accelerated job losses and factory closings here in the industrial Midwest over the past 21 months.

President Bush's political advisors had clearly hoped that the tariff would shore up electoral support in Rust Belt states this November. In one final irony, however, the WTO may actually have done Bush a favor by providing him an easy way out of this disastrous policy. While the Republicans may lose some campaign contributions from Big Steel, Bush may regain the support of traditionally Republican small manufacturers and their employees, some of whom had begun to look for another standard-bearer.

—Scott P. Richert

CARL F.H. HENRY, R.I.P. The greatest intellectual leader of the evangelical movement of the 20th century quietly passed away in his sleep at a retirement home in Watertown, Wisconsin, on December 7, at the age of 90. A scholar with the heart of an evangelist, Dr. Henry represented all of the strengths of the new evangelicalism, while exhibiting few of its flaws.

Often called “the thinking man's Billy Graham,” Dr. Henry, along with Harold Ockenga and Graham (his friend from Wheaton College), was one of the architects of the neo-evangelical movement of the 1940's. The three concluded that fundamentalism had become too sectarian and anti-intellectual to be able to speak the truth of the Gospel to the neopagan culture that had emerged in the United States following World War II.

Ockenga coined the term *neo-evangelicals* to describe Protestants who remained committed to the fundamentals of Protestant Christianity but repudiated the cultural isolationism of the fundamentalists. Using the platform of the mass “crusade”—and, later, the powerful medium of television—Billy Graham quickly became the movement's figure-

head. Dr. Henry, however, was its chief intellectual force, writing *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (1947), in which he called for a repudiation of extreme separatism among those who cherish the Gospel.

This was not a mere call to niceness, however. Fundamentalism, charged Henry, was bereft of a cogent theology and intellectually unprepared to do battle with the forces of modernity. Holing up in Bible colleges and engaging in increasingly vituperative polemics over relatively less significant doctrinal matters had stultified fundamentalists' witness before a watching world. Furthermore, he argued, their dispensational theology (which held, among other things, that, in these, the “last days,” the Church's primary mission was to guard against apostasy, not to seek unity) not only fostered fundamentalists' separatist mentality but prohibited them from engaging in any meaningful social action. This “Christ against culture” mentality (as H. Richard Niebuhr would later term it), in turn, helped to engender hostility toward the Gospel, contributing to the rapid decay of Western civilization on these shores and fulfilling the fundamentalists' own prophecy of latter-day chaos. The neo-evangelicals, Henry recalled in a 1996 interview with *Christianity Today*, needed to bear “the costly burden of creating an evangelical scholarship in a world that's in rebellion.”

Dr. Henry's life was devoted to just that. Chief among his enterprises was the production of his six-volume *God, Revelation, and Authority*, in which he painstakingly outlined all of the challenges toward biblical inerrancy and authority set forth by liberal and neo-orthodox theologians—and refuted them. Unlike the fundamentalists, who advocated the barest knowledge of Barth or Tillich, Dr. Henry insisted on intimate knowledge of the spectrum of modernist theology in order that, by contrast, the propositional claims of historic Christianity might be shown to be rational and sound.

Henry aided Ockenga in the founding of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, as a place for inculcating in young evangelical seminarians a deep knowledge of biblical theology. At Graham's request, he left his post at Fuller to serve as the founding editor of *Christianity Today*, which became the standard-bearer for the new evangelicalism and provided an alternative to the liberal *Christian Century*. After leaving CT in 1968, he continued to write, lecture,

and preach the Gospel, teaching courses at Fuller, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Gordon-Conwell.

Dr. Henry's erudition and wit were perhaps best illustrated at a program honoring Karl Barth. When Dr. Henry publicly introduced himself as the editor of *Christianity Today*, Barth cracked, "*Christianity Today*, or *Christianity Yesterday*?" Henry replied, "Yesterday, today, and forever."

Sadly, Dr. Henry lived to see evangelicalism develop its own uneasy conscience, as it moved from engaging the dying American culture to embracing it. Essentially a pandenominational movement, evangelicalism has struggled to establish sturdy theological moorings and, even now, cannot decide whether to allow the advocates of the new "openness theology" within its ranks. (Last October, the Evangelical Theological Society voted—though not without protest—to allow Clark Pinnock, who teaches that God cannot know the future and is bound, to some extent, by the constraints of time, to retain membership.) And some of the seminaries in which Dr. Henry invested so much of his life have become theological smorgasbords offering everything from Greek grammar to the slick marketing techniques of Bill Hybels and Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Church*.

The day before Dr. Henry died, Fuller Theological Seminary was featured in the *Los Angeles Times* because of its new project, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, to promote mutual understanding with Muslims, which includes restrictions on making "offensive statements" about Islam and prohibits anyone working on the project from proselytizing the followers of Muhammad. According to the *Times*, "the project proposes . . . to convene two national conferences of Christian and Muslim scholars to develop parallel peacemaking practices based on the Koran and other Islamic sources." Sometimes, as Dr. Henry said decades ago, "it is the theologians who need to be evangelized."

—Aaron D. Wolf

EPICYCLES:

- Whose Pedophilia?: **Michael Jackson**, the Gloved One, who lives at a ranch called Neverland, calls himself the King of Pop, claims he has a disease that is making him white (to match the face that plastic surgeons created for him), and once suffered severe burns when his

heavily oiled hair burst into flames, continues to dominate the headlines. Now, Mr. Jackson, 45, has been charged with seven counts of child molestation by a boy who appeared alongside him in a 2003 television special. Jackson has beat such charges before, claiming, as he is now, that the alleged victim is simply trying to extort money from him. He is not exactly a hard target, considering he continues to call his practice of "sharing his bed" (in a "nonsexual way") with children (not his own) a "beautiful, very loving thing."

The charges against Jackson do not amount to what we might call full sodomy but allege that Jackson engaged in inappropriate touching of the boy after plying him with wine and performed lewd acts in the boy's presence on several occasions. As his behavior and appearance have become more and more bizarre over the last decade, the King of Pop's fan base has steadily decreased (though he continues to sell records in the hundreds of thousands), so it is not surprising that many in the court of public opinion are inclined to believe that he is guilty. Still, Johnnie Cochran, one of Jackson's legal advisors, may wish to send yet another message to yet another oppressive white police force, as he did during the O.J. "still looking for the real killer" Simpson trial. Only time will tell if, before the verdict is read, members of the jury will flash the Black Power fist to Jackson as they did before The Juice.

All things considered, charges against Jackson are no surprise. What is interesting, however, is the American public's reaction. This is the same public that made an international celebrity of a man whose signature move and all-but-patented trademark is to grab his crotch while gyrating and thrusting onstage. And way back in 1984, when Jackson was first rocketing to superstardom with *Thriller*, his lyrics were full of both sexual innuendo and overt sexual references ("in the night / hit the lovin' spot / I'll give you all that I've got"). The American public has not

only approved this androgynous character but bought millions and millions of his records for their own children, allowing them to be part of the screaming throng of worshipers that greets him at airports and hotels. Sure, they might grimace at the reading of the current charges against him, but who bought all of those concert tickets for their children to watch a man touch himself, while singing that "the kid is not my son," though his mother and I did "dance on the floor"? Isn't exposing children to pornography an act of pedophilia?

OBITER DICTA: We receive many fine letters to the editor, some of which are responses to our writers' replies in *Polemics & Exchanges*. According to our editorial policy, we do not run these in the magazine. However, we are creating a new section on **ChroniclesMagazine.org** devoted to *Polemics & Exchanges*, which will allow you to respond to replies to letters to the editor, allowing for further dialogue and debate. Check out the website today and register your opinion.

Our poet this month is **B.R. Strahan**, who teaches poetry at Georgetown University. The publisher of *Visions-International*, Mr. Strahan has had over 500 poems published in such journals as *America*, *Christian Century*, *Cross Currents*, the *Seattle Review*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *First Things*, and the *Hollins Critic*. His latest book, *The Conjuror's Gallery*, was released in 2001 by Crosscultural Communications.

Our interior art is provided by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University, and he attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.

Our cover photo was graciously provided by the Open Society Institute.

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Charity Begins at Church

December can be a difficult month for American Christians, forced to look on passively as their sacred holy days are turned into a generic “holiday season.” The First Sunday in Advent has been replaced by “Black Friday,” the day on which retailers begin to turn a profit on holiday sales; and the end of the season (formerly St. Stephen’s Day, the Second Day of Christmas) is now “Returns Day,” when consumers swap presents given in love for what they really want.

Everywhere we turn, during Happy Holidays, we are battered by aggressive pitchmen dressed up like Santa and ringing bells for charities other than our churches or showing pictures of starving African children who are being rescued by OXFAM or Save the Children or the even less credible charities whose main effect has been to make matters worse in Third World countries while providing handsome incomes for the global bell-ringers who run them. (Some of the scams were well documented in Graham Hancock’s *Lords of Poverty*.)

Quite apart from the money they waste and the mischief they work upon the world’s poor, nongovernmental organizations (NGO’s) are an international political force that usurps some of the functions of government. They have also been, since at least the days of the Spanish Civil War, political in the more trivial sense of partisan. NGO’s, including those that claim to be Christian, are predominantly leftist and have lavished their charity on, for example, the Spanish Communists and anarchists who murdered priests and raped nuns, while denying aid to their victims. During the Bosnian-Krajina conflict, the Red Cross outdid itself in giving one-sided help to the Muslims, while virtually ignoring the Christian Croats and Serbs.

The political activities of NGO’s are only one symptom of a deeper malaise afflicting Western nations over the past several years: the subversion of the state. The internal forces undermining the state and diminishing the effectiveness of its government are many: There are ethnic *revanchiste* groups demanding that American institutions accommodate themselves to the culture and his-

tory of Mexicans and Africans, Muslims and Jews, and, in the extreme case, actual surrender of substantial amounts of territory; there are sexual and erotic minorities demanding recognition for the right of women to play football, “marry” other women, and have “gender”-neutral bathrooms in public buildings—it’s *so hard to make up one’s mind*, they say. The rainbow coalition of the exotic and perverse plays a minor role, however, compared with the lobbying activities of big money, big labor, and the thousand-and-one other causes whose bribes have blocked the arteries of congressional reform for decades.

Of the foreign threats, the most obvious is the vast network of international agencies that forms a quasiglobal government, from the World Bank, IMF, and WTO to the Hague Tribunal and the labyrinth of U.N. offices monitoring the endless treaties and agreements signed by politicians who are always eager to give away the American store if there is something in it for themselves. There are also hundreds of pressure groups and misnamed charities, however, that lobby the United Nations and disrupt the economic and moral lives of people around the globe. The most infamous, perhaps, is George Soros’ Open Society Foundation, which is dedicated to the eradication of the last vestiges of Christian Faith and morals on the planet.

The nation-state, for all its flaws and despite the many evils done in its name, is an instrument for human good that is worth defending. It is, however, only an instrument, not the good itself, and an imperfect one at that. The state exists, in one important sense, to divert male aggression into socially useful channels, turning schoolyard bullies into warriors and the irritating classroom debater into a statesman. Essentially male, the state has never done a good job of taking care of the sick and the poor or of educating children. Yes, when ambitious men turn their hands to these matters, they appear to make brilliant progress at first—setting up agencies, accomplishing goals, projecting five-year plans—but, in the end, the welfare and education of citizens become subordinate to the inter-

ests of ambitious men. This is one of the reasons why most of the tax dollars spent on health, education, and welfare ends up in the pockets of the middle-class bureaucrats and politicians who govern and manage the system.

It was a delusion of classical liberals that a society could function by relying on the laws of the free market and individual competition. Along the way, they eliminated the sense of *noblesse oblige* that induced traditional aristocracies to accept responsibility for the poor, and they devastated the Church, which had, for many centuries, played a central role in regulating morality, caring for the poor and the sick, and educating children. When liberalism died, sometime before World War I, no one thought of looking back across the ruins of the 18th and 19th centuries for some clues as to how to remedy the destruction. Instead, the reformers turned inevitably to Marx, whose followers (Lenin and Stalin, Franklin Roosevelt and the Kennedys) completed the social destruction begun by the liberals.

The only resistance came from the defeated liberals who proclaimed (in the words of Albert J. Nock) “Our enemy, the state”; the enemy, however, has never been the state *per se* but the modern Jacobin-Marxist state. Economic freedom and social responsibility are not, in reality, incompatible: They are the indispensable poles of any human social order. Today, unfortunately, as the state continues to arrogate more and more of the social authority it cannot justly or effectively manage, it is surrendering some of the very responsibilities that justify its existence: the defense of the country; the conduct of foreign policy; the regulation of markets in the interest of fair competition and the national interest.

Economic regulation is increasingly put in the hands of international agencies, and what is left is controlled by the pawns of multinational interests whose relationship to the American people is that of parasite to host. Even worse, control over our foreign and defense policies has been captured by special ethnic and economic interests. Big Oil is pushing for the conquest of the Caspian Sea basin; domestic big business wants to pun-

ish China, while multinational big business wants to protect its best source of cheap labor; Mexican-Americans, some of whom have citizenship in both countries, are playing an increasingly important role in skewing our policy (including immigration policy) to the south, and the Israel lobby is pushing for nothing less than a massive war in the Middle East that will align Israel and the United States against the entire Islamic world.

The democratic fiction in which our leaders take refuge is that these policies and programs, including the tax money funneled through such destructive agencies as the National Endowment for Democracy, were decided upon by the people's representatives, but how many of these policies have been the subject of a national debate? And what effect would such a debate have on congressional votes? In poll after poll, a majority of Americans have favored curtailing immigration and limiting abortion to cases involving incest, rape, and a threat to the mother's life, yet the people's will is never expressed by congressional legislation or executive orders.

The United States, by which I mean the American political class, has decided that moral questions should be left not to the people but to the wise men who rule the state and, where there is disagreement, to the Supreme Court and, ultimately, to international tribunals. Here, we face the same problems we have experienced in every other moral project undertaken by government. The leaders in charge, whether Senator Kennedy or Justice Stevens or Carla del Ponte, are driven by their own interests and by agendas set by special interests. Neither justice nor the interest of any real nation gets a hearing.

In the 19th century, if France conquered German territory or *vice versa*, the conquered people were subjected to nationalist policies that aimed not at their welfare but at making them more French or German. That is, as the Germans would say, the way of the world. Today, the conquered peoples of Serbia, Afghanistan, and Iraq are even worse off. They are run through a process of reconstruction that is aimed at subverting their ethnic, moral, and spiritual identity and turning them all into amoral hedonists, the obedient subjects of the Open Society.

What is the alternative? Certainly not to restore all social authority to the centralized nation-state, which has made a

thorough mess of the welfare and education of the American people. The traditional alternative was, of course, the Church, and not just the Catholic Church. In Eastern Europe, the Orthodox clergy were the cultural and moral leaders of their societies, and the same can be said for the early generations of Lutheran and Calvinist pastors, who caressed their congregations with iron hands. Better to be a sinner in the hands of an angry God than a backslider in Calvin's Geneva or Knox's Edinburgh.

In the Middle Ages, the Church was the welfare system and the educational system. It did not work perfectly, because it was staffed by men, but, even at their worst, these men had one great advantage: They represented the only significant countervailing force against the secular rulers. Even in England, where the henchmen of Henry, Edward, and Elizabeth laid violent hands on the Church's properties (thus plunging thousands of poor people into absolute want) and turned the monarch into an English pope, much of the social and moral functions of the Church were continued—and for centuries. The Poor Laws, for example, were administered not by the king's agents but by the parishes.

By the late 18th century, however, and even before the French Revolution, the political classes were turning against the Church. In Protestant England, the dominant note (as measured, for example, by fiction) is completely secular by 1800, and the revolutionary governments of the Jacobins in France (including that Jacobin *conservateur*, Napoleon) and the Piedmontese in Italy stripped the Church of most of Her "secular" responsibilities and confiscated the property that had enabled Her to play so important a role in providing assistance to the poor and educating children.

In the United States, the combination of high tax rates and free public schools spelled doom, not only for the social authority of the churches but for the educa-

tion and morality of the American people. As American society went through the degrading process of de-Christianization, a variety of Masonic and quasi-Masonic groups attempted to fill the void, and the generous members of Shrine Temples, as well as the members and brothers of Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks, and Moose, worked hard within their communities, feeding the poor and building hospitals.

The lodge brothers meant well, but the proliferation of organizations founded more on Masonic than on Christian principles further undermined the social authority of the Church. As most of these domestic NGO's (as we might term them) are in decline, the Christian members of Rotary might seriously consider transferring their time and money to their church communities. They should also quit wasting their resources on the Red Cross or Médecins sans Frontières and send their money, instead, to their own church's charitable arm. Catholic and Presbyterian charities may often waste their money on destructive projects, but there is still a residual sense of Christian charity within the bureaucracy, and church members have a greater opportunity to influence their own religious charities than they would ever have over the gigantic secular corporations that spend all too much of their money on overhead, salaries, and advertising.

So here we are today, a once-and-future Christian people living under a neopagan government that aids and abets Mr. Soros and other enemies of Christendom. The only choice we are offered is between a federal government that persecutes our religion and offends our morals and an international order that promises to scourge us with scorpions. To choose the lesser or greater of these two evils is to accept our status as slaves. Christians have an alternative, at least for the time being, and, if they do not return to their churches, they will have no one but themselves to blame when there are no churches to which to return.

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Approaching Oblivion (Manhattan) *by B.R. Strahan*

The demoralized houses sag
toward rusted rails.
Fragments of neglected walls
entreat the graying angels
perched on concrete monuments.

The sad and savage dogs, the feral cats
the fat and filthy pigeons,
are like mirrors in the streets
reflecting, in nature's own defeat,
the countless failures we concede to.

"The poor you shall always have with you."
So the prophet said,
and surely these unremembered dead
beneath their crumbling stones would agree:
Here even death shows no sympathy.

But we roll on toward that distant shining city,
unmoved by the crude eccentricity
of rude words sprayed on every open space.
Artifacts or art, they spring
like "the tree of heaven"* from this hellish place.

**The Ailanthus tree, which flourishes where no other tree will.*

Veerings (Veere, Zeeland) *by B.R. Strahan*

If "What's past is prologue"
then what sails off
the horizon
must be perfect,

all imaginings
of shape-shifting clouds,
signal flags in the wind's
inconstant constancy.

These orange tiles shrug off
the few handfuls of rain,
no memory there
but wear and the weather.

Clock-eye to the clouds,
the church tower waves
its wrinkled hand
and at the hour, loudly claps.

And those chimes, heard once
by the sea's entry hall,
will ring on still when all you hear
is the most perfect silence.

The Triumph of the Secular

Having failed to establish much of a numerical presence in American society, the Episcopal Church, USA, succeeds in attracting attention by the continuing antics of a long parade of outrageous ecclesiastics. In 2003, attention focused on the ordination of openly homosexual Vicky Imogene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire. While I am reluctant to add much to the torrent of argument caused by this event, one circumstance does deserve comment, and that is the absolute conviction that this particular "reform" is part of a powerful movement toward progress in Church and society. In asserting this idea, with all its implications about the superiority of secular over religious claims to authority, American and Western Christians do not appear to realize how massively they are departing from most of their religious history. Long after Bishop Robinson has been forgotten—long, perhaps, after his Church has disappeared—the resulting split in Christian loyalties may continue to reverberate.

As North American churches have discussed sexual issues, the debate has been largely fueled by the changing mores of the mainstream secular society. The pressure to change has not come from new textual discoveries by biblical scholars, nor from new insights from academic theologians, but from the changing secular environment. Awareness of changes in secular life pushed the mainstream Protestant churches to ordain female clergy during the 1970's and to liberalize their attitudes toward homosexuality over the past decade. The liberal view holds that the churches must reform to accommodate what Chief Justice Earl Warren famously characterized as "the evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society." For liberal Western Christians, these evolving standards constitute a source of authority quite as powerful as those orthodox values of tradition and Scripture, and generally more demanding. If anyone opposes these new ways—like the chorus of African and Asian bishops who denounced the "gay" ordinations as a "Satanic attack upon God's church"—this shows that they are ill intentioned, ill informed, or

(most likely) suffering from a grave psychological disorder that manifests itself in "homophobia."

Just look at these arguments, however, from the stance of a Christian living outside the sophisticated states of North America or Western Europe. Look especially at the claim that the churches should respect the values of the secular society and should be influenced by them. Put bluntly, for a very large number of Africans and Asians over the past 30 years, the experience of secular states has been a catastrophe. Should we trust secular society, and the states built upon these values? Ask an Iraqi about his experience with secular states over the past 30 years. Or a Ugandan, or a Zimbabwean, or a Kenyan. Or ask a Nigerian, such as Archbishop Peter Akinola, who led the churches of the global South in protesting the policies of the American Episcopalians. Akinola grew up during the horrific ethnic and religious strife of the 1960's, which claimed two million lives. From 1983 to 1999, his country was ruled by a series of brutal and stunningly corrupt military dictatorships that set back development at home and blighted the nation's reputation overseas. Arguably, the only thing of value to come out of these regimes was the word *kleptocracy*, which they inspired.

Americans generally accept that the changes in secular values over the past few decades really represent a wonderful story of progress. But contrast the experience of post-independence Africa or Asia. The new regimes that came to power in the aftermath of colonialism usually defined themselves as secular, nationalist, and (in a broad sense) socialist, and their commitment to modernization made them enemies of most manifestations of traditional religion. As hopes of modernization failed, so did the associated ideologies and the attendant rhetoric. In the Middle East, once-intoxicating ideologies such as Nasserism and Ba'athism confront the overwhelming challenge of resurgent Islam. In Africa, the systematic failures of secular ideologies produced the agonizing sequence of military regimes and kleptocracies in most countries, with their pervasive corruption.



In vivid contrast to these failures was the dramatic success of religious beliefs and structures. Christian churches are booming across Africa and Asia, despite all the opposition and persecution from secular states and from Muslim rivals. Here again, African Christians face a very different experience from those of the West, since martyrdom is both a recent and a continuing reality. Repression by secular states often includes an incidental religious element because of the strong Muslim tradition in African armies, itself a hangover from the preference of colonial powers for Muslim "warrior races." The soldiers serving dictatorships tend disproportionately to be Muslim, and their critics and opponents are Christian clergy.

For most of the global South, the secular narrative of progress is not plausible. Secular ideologies are false and destructive, their claims to provide growth and improvement are farcically inaccurate, and they are often associated with bloody repression. Where there is growth and success, it occurs within a religious framework. And Americans and Europeans argue that the Church should keep in tune with secular values? The concept is at best puzzling, at worst blasphemous.

This contrast forces us to ask, Which of those two models is more consistent with the whole history of Christianity from its earliest days? The vision of the benevolent state, evolving and maturing in its inexorable progress toward universal decency and benevolence? Or the image of the state as apocalyptic Beast, clamoring for the blood of the saints? The answer appears transparent. As Archbishop Akinola might have advised his Northern brethren: We both serve the Lord; you, in your way; I, in His.



George Soros, Postmodern Villain

by Srdja Trifkovic

NGO's, Behold Your God.

George Soros was born in Budapest in 1930 but, today, spends most of his time in New York City. Not much is known about his early years. He is the only eminent “holocaust survivor” who has been accused of collaboration with the Nazis. In 1947, he managed to sneak through the Iron Curtain, and, the official story goes, “he landed penniless in London, but by hard work and sheer genius, he rose to become one of the planet’s most successful investors and richest men.”

Mr. Soros’ peculiar moral values, political views, and ideological preferences would be immaterial without the money that he can spend promoting and imposing them. The bulk of that money—currently estimated at not less than seven billion dollars—was earned in the minus-sum game of currency and stock speculation, contributing nothing to the creation of wealth and making millions of ordinary people poorer in the process. His offshore Quantum Fund—legally headquartered in Curacao, beyond U.S.-government supervision—specializes in speculative investments to take advantage of deliberately induced political and economic weaknesses of different countries and regions. In an interview with the Swiss weekly *L’hebdo* (May 1993), Soros outlined his strategy: “I speculate on discrepancy between the reality and the public image of this reality, until a correctional mechanism occurs, which approaches these two.”

His profits are staggering. On September 16, 1992, he famously made a billion dollars in one day by betting against the Bank of England and the pound sterling. In July 1997, he contributed to the Southeast Asian financial crisis by shorting the Thai bath. In early 2000, he supposedly suffered losses on tech stocks, but some analysts now suggest that the burn of the NASDAQ was controlled and that Soros helped to start the fire. By last November, he was betting the U.S. dollar would plummet. As the London *Independent* reported (November 28, 2003), his activities were contributing to a growing belief on Wall Street that the dollar would slide even further.

There is nothing new in Soros’ approach to making money or in the ability of such a person to make an impact, invariably detrimental, on his host society’s morals and culture. What is new with Mr. Soros—in addition to the implausible claim that a private speculator could get as far as he has unaided by any established financial interests—is his systematic, concerted effort to use a large part of his fortune to promote his peculiar social and political views. He does so through a global network of “nongovernmental organizations” named after himself and active primarily in Eastern Europe but also in Africa, Latin America, and the United States. At age 75, money is not his object but his tool. He has used it to develop a well-coordi-

nated global operation centered on the Open Society Institute (OSI) in New York, which funds a network of subsidiaries in over 50 countries.

Even before the Open Society network came into being, Soros’ blueprint for postcommunist “shock therapy” reform had been put to the test. First came Poland, where the first postcommunist prime minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, was close to Soros and subsequently remained associated with his local subsidiary, the Stefan Batory Foundation. In his book *Underwriting Democracy*, Soros says that he personally prepared the broad outlines of Poland’s comprehensive economic reform:

I joined forces with Professor Jeffrey Sachs of Harvard University, who was advocating a similar program, and sponsored his work in Poland through the Stefan Batory Foundation . . . The IMF approved and the program went into effect on Jan. 1, 1990. It was very tough on the population, but people were willing to take a lot of pain in order to see real change.

Poland was only a start, however; far more important to his goals was his association in 1991-92 with Russia’s “reformist” leaders Anatoly Chubais and Yegor Gaidar and their Harvard guru Sachs. Within a year of their “shock therapy,” hyperinflation had wiped out Russians’ savings and the long-suffering middle class with it. Pensioners were literally starving. The parallel “privatization” of Russia’s huge resources—timber, oil, gas, chemicals, media—created the robber oligarchs and contributed to Russia’s effective deindustrialization. The country was lowered into neocolonial dependence: a supplier of energy and raw materials and an importer of high technology and manufactured goods. Nevertheless, in early 1993, Soros felt that Russia had not gone far enough: “The social safety net would also provide a powerful incentive to shut down loss-making enterprises. Factories could be idled and the raw materials and energy that go into production could be sold for more than the output.”

George Soros is out to deconstruct nations and states as Europe has known them for centuries, with Russia always the main prize. In an interview with the Moscow daily *Komersant* (August 8, 1997), he declared that “a strong central government in Russia cannot be democratic.” “The rescue of a free Russian economy depends on the attraction of Western investments,” he added, and, to that end, “Russia’s general public must accept the ideology of an open society.”

By that time, a total of 29 “Soros Foundations” were active in every postcommunist country. In 1994, his foundations spent a total of \$300 million; by 1998, that figure had risen to \$574 million. These are enormous sums in an impoverished and vulnerable Eastern Europe.

Chronicles’ foreign-affairs editor Srdja Trifkovic is the author of *The Sword of the Prophet: Islam—History, Theology, Impact on the World*.

Those foundations say that they are “dedicated to building and maintaining the infrastructure and institutions of an open society.” What this means in practice is clear from their many fruits. Regarding “women’s health” programs in Central and Southeastern Europe, for instance, one will look in vain for breast-cancer detection or prenatal or postnatal care. Soros’ main goal is clear and frankly stated: “to improve the quality of abortion services.” Accordingly, his Public Health Program has supported the introduction of medical abortion in Albania, Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia and the introduction of manual vacuum aspiration (MVA) abortion in Macedonia, Moldova, and Russia. In addition,

OSI has also worked with international and local NGOs to respond to the growing strength of the antiabortion movement. Through its influence on ministries of health and hospital administrators, that movement has made strides in reducing access to abortion . . . OSI will continue to support training in quality of care and efforts to keep abortion legal, safe, and accessible for all women in the region.

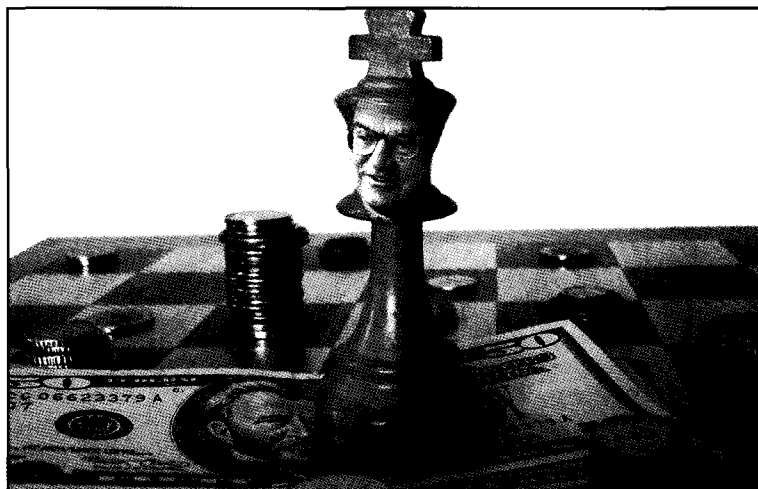
Why is Soros so interested in promoting more abortions in Eastern Europe? Overpopulation cannot be the reason: The region is experiencing a colossal demographic collapse and has some of the lowest fertility rates in the world. Unavailability of abortion cannot be the answer either: According to a recent U.N. report, five European countries had more abortions than live births in 2000—the Russian Federation, Bulgaria, Belarus, Rumania, and Ukraine. Overall, the report said, abortion rates are “substantially higher in central and eastern Europe and the CIS countries than in western Europe and North America.” The only logical answer is that Soros wants as few Russians and others born into this world as possible.

Soros’ public-health programs also “support initiatives focusing on the specific health needs of several marginalized communities” and promote “harm reduction”: “Its primary goal is to empower drug users to protect their health. Needle/syringe exchange and substitution therapies (e.g., methadone) are at the center of harm reduction health interventions.” His “harm reducers” have expanded their work with special initiatives on “sex workers” and prisoners and launched a policy initiative that attempts to ensure that “repressive drug policies do not impede the expansion of harm reduction efforts.”

Over the past five years, the Soros network has given a successful start to previously nonexistent “gay” activism in almost all of its areas of operation. The campaign for “LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender] Rights” is directed from Budapest, where Miriam Molnar’s 1999 policy paper published by OSI defined the “problem” as discrimination and the low level of acceptance, visibility, and political representation of LGBT’s. It was necessary either “to convince the society to accept LGBT people as equal and let the society make pressure [sic] to the politicians (through media) to change laws” or “to convince the politicians that LGBT people are equal and that they need help in convincing the rest of the society.” The overall goals were to generate discussion about LGBT identity within the community, to make them visible and “create a positive image,” and to establish regular forums of discussion with other groups in the region. Specific tasks included the development of websites in English with subsites in local languages, the establishment of task forces that would react to all

“homophobic” media outbursts in one “Pink Book,” and the organization of two-week summer schools for teachers that would “provide training about discrimination of [sic] LGBT people, disabled people, overweight people etc.”

In November 1999, a pilot project began at the Center for Publishing Development (OSI Budapest) on homosexual books in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, and Slovakia. That same year, Nash Mir (Our World) Gay and Lesbian Center announced that it had been registered as an NGO in the Ukraine. From that moment, the group was free to pursue its stated goals, including “fight against sexual-orientation discrimination” and “homophobic sentiments in societal consciousness” and “assistance to upbringing of gays’ and lesbians’ self-consciousness as equal and valuable members of society.” The group expressed gratitude for its legalization to the “Ukrainian branch of Soros Foundation Network (Renaissance Foundation) which lobbied our question in the Ministry of Justice and render [sic] legal assistance to us.”



H. Ward Stierett

Gay.ru is a Soros-funded Moscow NGO that has developed “into an established and recognized Russian gay and lesbian center” and “the clearing house for lesbian and gay groups scattered across the country”:

We keep contacts with all existing gay, lesbian, and AIDS organizations in Russia and maintain on-going correspondence and reporting to international gay and lesbian organizations . . . We have collected the biggest off-line library that features over a hundred Russian titles and some fifty English classic books on gay studies. It was greatly enhanced by the *Core Collection on Gay and Lesbian Issues* awarded to us by the Soros Foundation in 2000.

In Bucharest, Monika Barcsy of the local Soros branch bewailed the fact that, in Rumania, “the homosexual identity is stigmatized” and is one of the main bases for treating individuals as “the others” in an attitude of intolerance. Their families became the victims of prejudice “just because the society is unable to accept the legitimacy of same-sex relations as a ‘normal’ manifestation.” The author singles out the Rumanian Orthodox Church as a prime culprit: “The problem is that many Christian Orthodox students’ organizations and other student groups support the church.” In 1994, she points out, more than 100 theology students began a series of demonstrations in front of Rumania’s parliament against homosexual propaganda in

the media and collected signatures demanding legislation to criminalize same-sex relations. Barcsy concludes by reiterating the standard Soros line:

Gay men and lesbians need rights that guarantee them the expression of their identity in the public sphere . . . [T]he legal status of gays and lesbians, their ability to move and appear in public, to speak out and act together should be considered a very good test of the civic openness. [It] can't be resolved with the new laws made under the pressure of different human rights organizations. Romania needs . . . to ameliorate the negative responses towards the homosexuals from the majority population . . . There are "problems" with the society as a whole, and the society's mentality can't be changed overnight.

A key pillar of Soros' activities is his dictum that "no-one has a monopoly on the truth" and that "civic education" should replace the old "authoritarian" model. Civic education does not have to be "just a dialogue" between a teacher and students, he says; in addition, "we have projects like health education, where people use new ways to discuss issues like hygiene, diet, and sex." While "this does not sound like traditional civic education," he continues, it is "a new way for teachers to relate to their pupils," just as citizens must relate in new ways to governments and elected officials in societies trying to become more open and democratic.

Accordingly, throughout postcommunist Eastern Europe, the Soros Foundation's primary stated goal is to "democratize the education system" by "instituting curriculum reforms." What this means in practice has been demonstrated over the past three years by Serbia's education minister Gaso Knezevic, a friend and confidante of Soros. Since the first day of his tenure, Mr. Knezevic has insisted that schools must be transformed from "authoritarian" institutions into "exercise grounds" for the "unhindered expression of students' personalities in the process of equal-footed interaction with the teaching staff, thus overcoming the obsolete concept of authority and discipline rooted in the oppressive legacy of patriarchal past." Mr. Knezevic started his reform with primary schools, with a pilot program of "educational workshops" for children ages 7 to 12. The accompanying manual, financed by the Open Society, rejects the quaint notion that the purpose of education is the "acquisition of knowledge" and insists that the teacher has to become the class "designer" and that his relationship with students should be based on "partnership."

In Russia, Soros' associates exercise great control over the selection of textbooks for Russian schools. According to a press release by the Gaidar Youth Library, financial support from the Open Society Institute provided it with computers, videocassettes, and CD's, all of which made "special training" for the children of "underprivileged people" possible in the library:

We organized a special seminar "Children's rights nowadays" for all specialists who took part in our project . . . The working group of the program "The Circle of Friends" is grateful to the "Open Society" Institute (Soros Fund, Budapest) for the opportunity to realize this project in a full volume.

In 1999, the Moscow Open Society office started a major

five-year project, "The Development of Education in Russia." Its goal is to "reeducate rural teachers at a cost of US \$100-150 million" (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, September 19, 1998). It is also applying a program called "Tolerance" in Russian secondary schools, but its masterminds may have made a linguistic blunder. According to a Russian critic of the program,

The Russian translation of this Latin word—*tyerpimost*—has the dual meaning of *prostitution* and could be confused with *doma tyerpimosti*, houses of ill fame . . . How come this financial manipulator tries to teach us about tolerance, us who grew up with Leo Tolstoy, one of the first philosophers of non-violence? . . . But Mr. Soros is also a horribly distorted mirror, which should make us see our own, present image, without blinking or turning away. There are times when evil can become an eye-opener, when its derisive laughter can waken us up and help regaining our strength. We should not miss this opportunity.

A first step in that direction may have been taken last November 7, when the OSI Moscow office was raided by a private security company hired by the owner of the building with whom the foundation was engaged in a protracted legal battle. Only weeks before, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the billionaire oligarch and OSI Moscow executive director who has his own NGO called the Open Russia Foundation, was arrested and charged with tax evasion, theft, forgery, and fraud. Soros denounced the arrest as an act of "persecution" that should disqualify Russia from belonging to the G-8 group of industrialized countries. "I believe that he acted within the constraints of the law. I am doing the same in the United States," said Soros, alluding to his multimillion-dollar donations toward "regime change" in Washington next November. The American press indignantly reported that the raid was directed against a philanthropic organization that had spent "more than \$US 1 billion on charitable projects in Russia in the past 15 years."

"Racism" is Soros' regular obsession, but he faced the potential problem of finding it in racially nondiverse Eastern European countries. This has been resolved by identifying a designated victim group—Gypsies! "Few minority groups in Europe face as much social, economic, and political discrimination as do Romani people," says OSI. Being a "Roma activist" has become a lucrative designation within the community. Seventy of the most promising ones came to the conference "Roma in Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future," held in Budapest last summer, at which Soros inaugurated a "Decade of Roma Inclusion." The conference offered policy recommendations, some of which could have been written by Jesse Jackson: first, obligatory and free preschool education in desegregated classrooms; second, Romani assistants in the classroom, especially in preschool; third, antibias training for teachers and school administrators; and fourth, integration of Romani history and culture in textbooks at all levels.

Legally mandated affirmative-action programs for Roma in high schools and universities were recommended by the delegations of Rumania and Serbia-Montenegro. On employment, the conference recommended tax incentives for those who employ Roma and access to low-interest credit for small Roma-owned family businesses. The Czech and Slovak delegations also proposed setting aside a percentage of government contracts for Roma construction firms. In the area of

housing, specific demands were made to combat “racism and discrimination,” including the “legalization” of shantytowns and “equal access” to municipal housing. The conference concluded that combating racial discrimination against Roma must be pursued through the adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation complying with the requirements of the E.U. Race Equality Directive.

The Rumanian delegation demanded that the Bucharest government recognize the Roma holocaust by issuing a public apology along with urgent adoption of a reparations package. The European Union was asked to make sure that Roma are broadly involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of all E.U. spending on Roma projects.

Soros’ “programs” would have been deemed laughable or outrageous in their target countries only a decade ago. No one is laughing today, however. For thousands of young Eastern Europeans, to become a “Soroshite” represents today what joining the Party represented to their parents: an alluring opportunity to have a reasonably paid job, to belong to a privileged elite, and, for many, to travel abroad. The chosen few go to Soros’s own Central European University in Budapest, where they are taught that affirming a scientifically grounded truth is “totalitarian” and that the sovereign nation-state is evil.

There is not one patriot (Russian, Croat, Latvian, Serb, Rumanian, Hungarian) or one practicing Christian on Soros’ payroll. In all postcommunist countries, Soros relies on the sons and daughters of the old communist establishment, who are less likely to be tainted by any atavistic attachments to their native soil, culture, and traditions. The more successful among them—and the most loyal—may spend years drifting from one “project” to another, and some have been living that way for more than a decade. Soros has revealed (in *Underwriting Democracy*) that his Open Society foundations will help create an international web, at the heart of which will be the computerized base of personal data that will enable Western multinationals to find the local candidates they need.

These new janissaries, just like those of the Ottoman army of old, have to prove their credentials by being more zealous than the master himself; as the Balkan proverb has it, “a convert is worse than a Turk.” Nobody is more insanely vehement in his insults against the Serbian people and their history, religion, art, and suffering than a dozen Serb-born columnists who are on the payroll of Sonja Licht, Soros’ Gauleiter in Belgrade.

Hoi polloi are force-fed the daily fare of OSI *agitprop* by “the Soros media”—the term now exists in over a dozen languages—from the *Gazeta Wyborcza* in Warsaw to *Danas* (*Today*) in Serbia, the *Monitor* in Montenegro, the Markiza TV channel in Bratislava, and *Vreme* weekly and the B-92 electronic media conglomerate in Belgrade. They invariably parrot Soros’ views and ambitions, reflected by the agenda of the local Soros foundation at home and, in world affairs, by the International Crisis Group (ICG), largely financed by Soros and run by his appointees.

Soros’ agenda in world affairs is clear from the fact that his appointees include Gen. Wesley Clark, who commanded NATO forces in the war against Serbia in 1999; Louise Arbour, the former chief prosecutor of the Yugoslav war-crimes tribunal at The Hague; former assistant secretary of state Morton Abramowitz, an enthusiastic supporter of Bosnian Muslims and Albanians in the wars of Yugoslav succession; and former

national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, whose visceral Russophobia aided and abetted the rise of Osama bin Laden and his jihadist cohorts.

As Gilles d’Aymery noted two years ago, Soros is not just the power behind the Open Society Institute, the U.S. Institute of Peace, the National Endowment for Democracy, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the International Crisis Group:

[L]ike an immense Jules Verne octopus, [he] extends his tentacles all over Eastern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus as well as the republics of the former Soviet Union. With the help of these various groups [it is possible] not only to shape but to create the news, the agenda and public opinion to further aims which are, in short, the control of the world, its natural resources and the furtherance of the uniform ideal of a perfect world polity made in America.

Regarding “women’s health” programs, Soros’ main goal is clear and frankly stated: “to improve the quality of abortion services.”

That polity will not be “American” in any recognizable sense if Soros has his way, however. Here, he supports increased government spending and tax increases, drug legalization, euthanasia, open borders and immigration, immigrant entitlements, feminism, free abortion on demand, affirmative action, and “gay” rights. He opposes the death penalty in any circumstance. One of the trustees of OSI is Lani Guinier, the law professor whom Bill Clinton tried to nominate as head of the civil-rights division of the Department of Justice but changed his mind when she was found to favor minority veto power over legislation. Its president is Aryeh Neier, who had for 12 years been executive director of the Soros-funded Human Rights Watch and, before that, national director of the American Civil Liberties Union for eight years.

That he is anti-Bush is unremarkable, but Soros’ statement last December that the defeat of the President is “a matter of life and death” was silly. His largesse to Bush’s foes—although substantial—does not reflect the stated urgency of the moment: \$15 million for *America Coming Together*; \$3 million for John Podesta’s new think tank; and \$2.5 million for *MoveOn.org* falls far short of a month’s cost of running his many foundations around the world.

Soros remains primarily committed to destroying the remaining bastions of the family, sovereign nationhood, and Christian Faith east of the Trieste-Stettin line. He senses that his full-throttle intervention in America is not necessary, because things are gradually going his way anyway. No matter who is his party’s anointed candidate come next November, the real choice will be between George and Gyorgy, and that is not much of a choice.

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The Church and NGO's

Shall I Crucify Your King?

by Hugh Barbour, O.Praem.

“I hope a stamp from this place works for America.” So I reads a postcard that my mother, as a girl of 20, sent her parents from the Vatican in 1950. I remember teasing her about her doubts when, as an undergraduate, I unearthed the postcard in my grandmother’s attic three decades later. When I cockily suggested that her Episcopalian girls’ school had needed a lecture or two on political geography or history, she smiled wearily, as she usually did when challenged, and said, “Well, it just never occurred to me that a church could be its own country.” This exchange came to mind when perusing the website and related links of a U.N.-recognized NGO called Catholics for a Free Choice. This entity, which seems to have publications but no membership or meetings, promotes abortion, contraception, and, through a similarly fantastic cyberspace subsidiary, the overthrow of the Holy See’s status as a state. A header on *Seechange.org* asks: “The Catholic Church at the United Nations: Church or State?” We read there that, “Call it the Holy See, the Vatican, or the Roman Catholic church, it’s a religion, not a country . . . We believe that the Holy See, the government of the Roman Catholic church, should participate in the UN in the same way as the world’s other religions do—as a *non-governmental organization*.” A link to the British National Secular Society tells us that “The Holy See owes its participation in the UN to an accident of history—the membership of Vatican City to the Universal Postal Union.” I guess my mother’s practical doubt about the efficacy of a beautiful stamp depicting Pius XII’s proclamation of the Assumption of the Virgin is, for some, a matter of principle: The Church should not enjoy sovereignty.

Leaving aside—with pleasure and a certain embarrassment—the question of the Holy See’s or any state’s involvement in the current United Nations, what ultimately distinguishes an NGO from a state is that a state is sovereign; any other organization, however powerful, is not. The creation of the category of NGO’s and the rise of their preponderant influence, under the aegis of the United Nations, which functions as a kind of accrediting agency for them, must involve the lessening of the power or recognition of sovereign states and the Church. On this model, religious NGO’s have the same role as secular ones, namely, that of supplanting the sovereignty of states. This is precisely what is happening, and so, in many places in the world, the independence of both state and Church has been accordingly outraged.

In what does sovereignty consist? In short, sovereignty is the fact of having no superior authority under God and, thus, having authority from God. There are only two societies that

have this quality: the state and the Church. They differ in the manner in which they derive their status and power, but they share the characteristic of having no superior in their respective spheres. The state comes from the natural law of human nature: “Nature and Nature’s God.” The Church comes from the immediate initiative among men of God Himself: “upon this Rock, I will build my Church.” All other human societies are, in various ways, under the authority of the state or the Church. Pius XII expounded the necessary distinctions to the Sacred Roman Rota in 1945:

If . . . we consider the preferred thesis of democracy—a thesis which distinguished Christian thinkers have defended in every age—that is to say, that the original subject of the civil power derived from God is the people, we get an even clearer idea of the distinction between the Church and the State, even the democratic State . . . The origin of the Church, unlike the origin of the State, is not to be found in the natural law. The most extensive and most accurate analysis of the human person offers no basis for concluding that the Church, like civil society, would have come to be and would have developed naturally. She derives from a positive action of God, above and beyond the social character of men, with which she is, notwithstanding, in perfect harmony; wherefore the ecclesiastical power and with it the corresponding juridical power was born of the will and the act by which Christ founded his Church. But this is no hindrance to the fact that, once constituted as a perfect society by the action of the Redeemer, there should spring from her inmost nature many elements of resemblance with the structures of civil society . . . The foundation of the Church as a society was effected, contrary to the origin of the State, not from beneath, but from above.

A simpler, more vivid scriptural warrant is wanting here. St. John’s Gospel will supply it. First, the sovereignty “from above” of the Church: “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”

Then, the sovereignty “from beneath” of the state. After Pilate hears the demands of the people and warns Jesus of His danger: “Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.”

In the present context, it is worth noticing that the chief priests have recourse to Pilate since they explicitly deny that they have sovereignty—since they do not acknowledge their

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own right to try a man and put him to death, the ultimate indication of sovereign power. Even so, they manage to pressure Pilate into washing his hands of his responsibility as a minister of justice, and so Christ is crucified under the charge of being the sovereign King of the Jews. Translated to a contemporary context: A consortium of religious nongovernmental organizations pressure the state to suppress the rights of the Christians and so to abdicate its own independence as well.

If the reader cannot visualize what I am talking about, let him examine the website of the Orthodox diocese of Raska and Prizren in Kosovo and that of the Catholic *Comunità di Sant' Egidio*. On the former, he can find the ongoing tragedy of the extermination of the Church under the eyes of a “sovereign” state rendered virtually powerless by a swarm of political and religious predators. On the latter, he can read the boasting moralizations of a religious NGO about how it managed to support a parallel Islamic government and educational system and liberate its ruler during the NATO war, without a single word about the constant and violent persecution of the ancient Christian Church of Kosovo by those very clients of NGO expertise. Just to point out this incongruity, by the way, opens us up to the charge of justifying the opportunistic perfidy of Slobodan Milosevic. Further, we will be told that the Church is nationalistic, when, in fact, She only insists on Her sovereign supernatural freedom; we will be told that Islam is, after all, only a religion, when, in fact, it is, by its own teaching, a nation.

The point is that, wherever the interests of the Christian Church are at stake throughout the world, if NGO's are a serious power, then the Church's interests will be undermined by these entities, whether or not they are religious, just as they undermine the state. Nor do the unconvinced need to remind us of all the good that NGO's do; this is obvious, as they could do nothing if they did not do some good. This fact is, however, sadly accidental to the fact that they either indicate or cause the weakening of the sovereign societies of Church and state.

The Catholic Church, through the Holy See, has full diplomatic relations with over 170 states throughout the world, including, since the presidency of Ronald Reagan, the United States. Her nature as a sovereign moral person in international law has, by a sort of continuing geopolitical miracle, never been denied in practice by Her worst enemies. The Church's rationale for Her role is stated very soberly and unapologetically in the Code of Canon Law in Canon 113,1: “The Catholic Church and the Apostolic See have the nature of a moral person by divine law itself.” The Latin is a bit stronger: *ex ipsa ordinatione divina*. Commenting on this passage, Archbishop Tauran, the Holy See's former “foreign minister,” had this to say in a discourse given in April 2002 at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan: “This means that the Holy See . . . will endure, even if it were to be reduced to its simplest expression in the person of the Pope and even to the end of time. This theological and canonical definition is corroborated by its historical and juridical condition.”

Although *Chronicles* is not likely to be on the antechamber tables of many (if any) Apostolic Nunciatures, this canonical-clerical pundit (see how I humiliate myself hoping for that *captatio benevolentiae*) offers this counsel to the diplomatic corpus of the Holy See: Beware of lay Catholic NGO's; you do not need them anyway. Stick to entities that remain under the immediate direction of the hierarchy, unless you want to undermine the authority of the Church and offend our separated brethren, whose ecclesiastical rights, at least in the case of the Orthodox,

John Paul II has declared to be equivalent to our own. Pius IX did not need Lord Acton or Veuillot's movements, as Pius XI did not need Maurras or Coughlin, nor John Paul II the *Comunità di Sant' Egidio*. Draw apostles from these movements, if you will, as Our Lord did from the zealots, but not diplomatic collaborators. They will only become unruly competition. It is undoubtedly true that as far as ideological purity is concerned—of the right or the left—these movements may be more clear, more consistent in their policies than the Holy See, and so more attractive to some; they will pass, however, and the Holy See will remain, and, most of all, she has the real responsibility before the One Who gave her an indefectible nature, so like that of the Church Herself of which she is the organ of unity.



World War II gave Pius XII the opportunity to reflect on the nature of the relation of Church and state, and the role of the Church in international affairs through the Holy See. Here is the fine point, the razor's edge of his considerations from an allocution of 1949:

If there should ever come a day—We say this as a matter of pure hypothesis—when the physical reality of Rome were to crumble; if ever this Vatican Basilica, the symbol of the one, invincible, and victorious Church, were to bury beneath its ruins the historical treasures and the sacred tombs it enshrines, even then the Church would not, by that fact, be overthrown or undermined; the promise of Christ to Peter would always remain true, the Papacy would continue unchanged, as well as the one, indestructible Church founded on the Pope alive at that time. Thus it is: Rome is eternal in the Christian and supernatural sense, is superior to the Rome of history. Her nature and her truth are independent of the historic City.

Perhaps the future holds the ultimate political irony, one foreseen by Robert Hugh Benson: churches and states turned into NGO's, and only one body preserving what is truly sovereign in both against the machinations of the Lord of the World. For, since the authority of sovereign states and the Church derives from God, albeit in different ways, the weakening of the sovereignty of either leads directly to the rejection of Him “of whose Kingdom there will be no end.”



What Empire?

The Proliferation of U.S. Military Bases

by Sean Moir

One tangible *effect* of all of our recent wars has been a marked proliferation of U.S. military bases around the world. Since the end of the Cold War, the number of countries that host American bases has increased by almost one third, to over 60. Whether this proliferation has been a serendipitous result of unavoidable armed conflict or is an integral part of our foreign policy is a question that must be addressed.

Soon after Bill Clinton took office, former secretary of defense Dick Cheney and one of his undersecretaries, Paul Wolfowitz, issued a report that warned against letting the U.S. military decline in the wake of the Cold War. One of the essential elements in their defense strategy was the notion of projecting a "forward presence" that required establishing a network of "forward bases" inside "host nations" around the world.

After receiving a lukewarm reception from the Clinton administration, their ideas were put on hold until George W. Bush took office, at which point a very similar report was issued by a fledgling think tank known as the Project for the New American Century (PNAC). Their now infamous report, "Rebuilding America's Defenses," by Paul Wolfowitz, among other neo-conservatives, stated that "US forces are poorly positioned to respond to today's crises" and that we must "reposition US forces to respond to 21st century strategic realities by shifting permanently-based forces."

They recommended that "the United States should seek to establish a network of 'deployment bases' or 'forward operating bases' to increase the reach of current and future forces." These bases would supplement other bases and provide prepositioned materiel in times of crisis. They could expand and contract as needed, while any required resources could be siphoned from established bases in Germany, Japan, and South Korea.

Knowing that the Clinton administration was not fully committed to the recently established bases in the Balkans and the Persian Gulf, the PNAC report specifically recommended that these bases be garrisoned permanently by U.S. forces. It called for more bases in East Asia, and even India, in order to keep China in check. And it recommended more bases in South America to make up for the loss of Panama.

Although this report initially received a more positive reception than Cheney's earlier work, it was not until September 11 that a strong enough threat to the United States existed to justify its aggressive strategies. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld affirmed his support for this approach last year when he unveiled his Six-Step Strategy for transforming the military, in which the second step was "to project and sustain power in distant theatres."

In a 2003 study coauthored by Kurt Campbell, the senior vice president of the Center for Strategic and International Studies

(CSIS), the idea of establishing forward bases, now termed "lily pads," was further delineated. It echoed the idea that "American defense planners want to create a global network of bare-boned facilities that could be expanded to meet crises as they arise." The authors anticipated crisis points existing in

regions where there is a high risk of failed states, Islamic radicalism, drug trafficking, and other forms of volatility. Together, these regions form an arc of instability that bends from the triborder region of South America through most of Africa, the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and Central and Southeast Asia.

Although this policy of expanding forward bases around the world has received very little critical analysis in the American press, it is by no means an international secret. Last May, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz addressed a Pacific security conference in Singapore, where he announced that "[W]e are in the process of taking a fundamental look at our military posture worldwide." In December, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas J. Feith explained to members of CSIS that any new military configurations will require absolute compliance from other countries because, "for this deployability concept to work, forces must be able to move smoothly into, through, and out of host nations."

Some might say that the whole international "War on Terror" is just a vehicle, spawned by the neocons, justified by September 11, and used to establish a foothold within a perceived "arc of instability" made up of weak, unstable, and mineral-rich nations. This might seem farfetched, but, when we look at recent wars strictly through a "military bases" lens, events do appear to be proceeding roughly as Cheney and Wolfowitz originally outlined over a decade ago. Indeed, almost all of the recent base proliferation has occurred in regions of military conflict, such as Southeastern Europe, the Persian Gulf, and Central Asia.

After the first Gulf War, large military bases were left behind in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and basing rights were established in the Gulf states of Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and United Arab Emirates. One prize from the otherwise humiliating Somalian adventure was the acquisition of basing rights across the Red Sea in Yemen's Port of Aden, where the U.S.S. *Cole* made its home port. Operations in Yugoslavia resulted in even more bases in Hungary, Albania, Bosnia, Macedonia, and Kosovo. In order to conduct the war in Afghanistan, the Bush administration required new bases in Afghanistan herself, as well as various basing rights in Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. According to Campbell's CSIS study, these "new US bases in Central Asia, established to assist the Afghan campaign, may end up serving longer term aims, such as prosecuting the war on terrorism or, perhaps, checking a rising China."

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Which brings us to the ongoing conflict in Iraq. Even before September 11, the authors of the PNAC report claimed that “the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein.” Although there may never have been a plan to establish permanent military bases in Iraq herself, the neocons have known all along that until Iraq is stabilized—which may still take a long time—all the lily pads in the Persian Gulf region are in danger.

There need not be a major conflict for new bases to be established. As part of the War on Drugs’ Plan Colombia, a number of bases were established within and around Colombia in the 1990’s. This included forward bases in Honduras, Ecuador, Curacao, Peru, and Brazil. During Operation Enduring Freedom, the Philippines were reoccupied only a few years after U.S. withdrawal. Even Poland and some Black Sea ports saw the establishment of new bases last year to help with the most recent Iraq conflict.

Apart from a pretty wide gap in Africa and another across mainland East Asia, the U.S. military now has forces deployed throughout the arc of instability. China will likely remain a problem for years to come, but, as far as Africa is concerned, the *Wall Street Journal* reported in June that the United States plans to create bases from Djibouti, on the Red Sea, across North Africa to Morocco, on the Atlantic.

All this focus on the redeployment of troops begs the question, *Is it important for the United States to expand her international footprint in the first place?* Cheney’s 1993 document argued that implementing his plan was necessary in order to “secure and extend the democratic ‘zone of peace’ that we and our allies now enjoy, preclude threats, and guard our national interests.” The PNAC report said that America must remain the world’s “guarantor of liberty, peace and stability,” and, to do so, the United States must “extend its position of global leadership by maintaining the preeminence of US military forces.”

If we take the neocons at their word, they have tasked themselves with protecting the world from evil in what may seem

like an act of pure *noblesse oblige*. They may have ulterior motives, however.

When the United States first started getting involved in the Persian Gulf over a decade ago, many critics pointed to oil as the primary motivating interest. Most supporters of Gulf War I and II and the mainstream media have slid right past the oil question, and it has never received the thorough critical analysis that it deserves. The entire “arc of instability,” save for a gap in Central Asia, is also an arc of mineral wealth. And Central Asia, of course, is the latest hot spot for pipelines leading from the Caspian Sea oilfields down to the friendly Indian Ocean.

Some Pentagon officials, such as Thomas Barnett of the Naval War College, argue that an expanded U.S. force is necessary to make the world safe for economic globalization. In his view, the war in Iraq “will mark a historic tipping point, the moment when Washington takes real ownership of strategic security in the age of globalization.”

A number of critics, mostly from the left, say the reason why the United States is establishing so many new military bases is to secure regional legitimacy and influence for the burgeoning American Empire. Of course, President Bush has already assured us that “America has never been an empire,” and, similarly, Donald Rumsfeld defends neocon policies, saying, “we’re not imperialistic. We never have been.” It is difficult to take a solid position in such an argument, however, since *empire* is a vague term heavily laden with connotation. Labeling someone an *imperialist* is about as meaningful as calling him a terrorist or a communist. It can always be denied.

Future historians may conclude that an aggressive military posture is simply inevitable when the Pentagon is allowed to drive foreign policy. Right now, however, this remains speculation and distracts us from the critical facts. In the end, what is most important for Americans to understand, whether they agree with the policies or not, is that, behind all the sophistry and images that we are being fed by neocon politicians and pundits, there lies a very aggressive, very real, and largely unchallenged proliferation of military bases around the world.

Lost Chords (in 4/4 time)

by B.R. Strahan

They’re better forgotten
like the girl glimpsed
in a crowd, like clouds
at 30,000 feet.

All those songs you wrote
when the body insisted
on its say, when the play
was only in its second act.

The fact is, you can’t
remember anymore.
The words are just an excuse
for an amateur sing-along.

After all “the music
goes ’round and ’round,”
like the carousel. You got off.
It keeps on turning.

The Tobin Tax

The NGO Plan to Fleece America

by Cliff Kincaid

A closed-door meeting of nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) was held on January 16, 2003, in Washington, D.C., to consider how to "reform" "the global financial architecture" in order "to stabilize the world economy, reduce poverty and inequality, uphold fundamental rights, and protect the environment." This is socialist double-talk for imposing a global tax on America. The real aim of the NGO's is to raid American pensions, savings accounts, IRA's, and mutual funds.

These NGO's, which call themselves the New Rules for Global Finance Coalition, meet on a regular basis to plan the implementation of the Tobin tax, named after the late Yale University economist James Tobin. They have now released a book, *Debating the Tobin Tax*, based on the conference. Their target is the more than one trillion dollars per day being exchanged as currencies are traded and investments are made here and abroad. Revenues from even a small Tobin tax have been estimated in the trillions of dollars per year.

Ruthanne Cecil of Tobin Tax Initiative-USA warned participants at the Washington conference to avoid using the phrase "global tax" in pushing the proposal. It must have occurred to her that many Americans understand history well enough to know that America was born in a tax revolt and that they might take offense at another King George-style global initiative.

NGO's, who like to think of themselves as "the conscience of the world," should not be underestimated. They have repeatedly demonstrated their power on the global stage. Working with and through sympathetic governments and the United Nations, NGO's helped to create the International Criminal Court, a U.N.-backed body that has the power to imprison Americans in foreign jails without constitutional protections. NGO's were behind a U.N. treaty to outlaw land mines, have worked tirelessly against the death penalty, and claim some success in getting the world to adopt "debt relief" for the Third World by transferring more of our wealth—through foreign aid—to bankrupt regimes.

NGO's tend to be successful because they claim to be acting on behalf of the world's poor, promoting justice and democracy, and saving lives. Their key ally in the global tax battle, however, is billionaire George Soros, who made his fortune by exchanging and speculating on foreign currencies—the very activities that would be covered by the Tobin tax—and is now spending millions of dollars to defeat President Bush and to elect Democrats this fall. Soros has declared that the Tobin tax is a "valid suggestion" for raising international revenue and that opposition to implementing the tax can be overcome.

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Thomas Palley, the director of the Globalization Reform Project at Soros' Open Society Institute, was a featured speaker at the January 2003 event. A former AFL-CIO assistant director of public policy, Palley wrote an article for the May-June 2001 issue of *Challenge* that made "the Case for an International Currency Transactions Tax."

The meeting, which I attended, was underwritten by the Flint, Michigan-based Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the German-based Boell Foundation. It was held at the Carnegie Conference Center. NGO's also receive substantial funding from such institutions as the Ford Foundation, which now has assets of over \$14 billion, and the Rockefeller Foundation, which has an endowment of \$3.1 billion.

Another key NGO ally is U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, who owes his career to the Ford Foundation, having received a Ford Foundation fellowship to come to the United States and study at Macalester College in Minnesota as a young man. He has spent precious little time in his native Ghana and shows no interest in going home.

At a November 2001 event where he was to receive an award from the Institute for International Education, Annan was introduced by Susan Berresford, president of the Ford Foundation, who said that recipients of foundation fellowships are now playing "pivotal roles in major organizations in and outside of government." Ford is grooming the international elite, many of whom come from NGO's, attend U.N. conferences, and influence foreign governments.

The key members of the "New Rules" coalition run the gamut from typical left-liberal groups to religious-oriented organizations. Their names and affiliations are: Ira Arlook (New Economy Communications); Jamie Baker (Oxfam America); Peter Bakvis (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions); Ariel Buirá (G-24 Secretariat); Aldo Calia (Center of Concern); Randall Dodd (Financial Policy Forum); Navroz Dubash (World Resources Institute); Seamus Finn (Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate); Alex Greenbaum (New America Foundation); Aaron Goldzimer (Environmental Defense); Jo Marie Griesgraber (Oxfam America); Bernhard Gunter (consultant); Kelly Hicks (U.S. Catholic Conference); Didier Jacobs (Oxfam America); John Langmore (International Labor Organization liaison to the United Nations); Tom Palley (Open Society Institute); Liane Schalatek (Heinrich Boell Foundation); Frank Schroeder (Friedrich Ebert Foundation); John Sewell (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars); Paul Tennessee (National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees); Jim Weaver (American University); Emira Woods (Interaction); and Chuck Woolery (United Nations Council of Organizations, Washington, D.C.).

Driving their agenda is a Marxist notion that the United

States is exploiting the people and natural resources of the world. Special “rights” and even financial compensation must be awarded to these “victims.” According to this view, international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and even the United Nations must be restructured and provided with new financial resources to supervise and manage the redistribution of the world’s wealth. The United States, as the leading capitalist state, has to pay the largest price.

One powerful NGO, the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens (ATTAC), was created at a meeting in Paris on December 11-12, 1998, and claims 80,000 members worldwide as well as an international network of independent national and local groups in 33 countries. The new Tobin tax book includes a contribution from Bruno Jetin, a representative of the French ATTAC affiliate. Jetin spoke to the gathering in Washington and acknowledged in private conversation that his group works hand-in-glove with the French Communist Party and the “Socialist parties on the Left.”

Jetin said ATTAC does not have a formal U.S. affiliate, although his group works with Dean Baker of the Center for Economic Policy Research (CEPR), which reports that it receives 85 percent of its funds from the Ford Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Baker stated at the forum that proposals for a global tax might gather support in the United States if politicians said that the proceeds would go for healthcare, education, and similar causes.

A follow-up “Tobin Tax Meeting for Organizers & NGO’s” was held at the headquarters of Baker’s CEPR. His website features a call by “world economists” for a global Tobin tax, and his presentation at the Washington conference explained how the collection of Tobin taxes could be enforced.

Such meetings and conferences are held around the world. Robin Round of the Canada-based Halifax Initiative told a Montreal NGO conference that “one of the major obstacles” to the adoption of the Tobin tax is “opposition in the U.S.,” though the proposal is still “feasible.” She emphasized that “It is easy to track these [financial] transactions and it is easy to tax them,” because they go through U.S. dollars and U.S. banks.

A variation of the Tobin tax proposal was offered by Democratic Sen. Jeff Bingaman at the request of Democratic Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle in 1996. Entitled “Scrambling to Pay the Bills: Building Allies for America’s Working Families,” the Bingaman report called for a securities-transfer excise tax (STET) that would extend to transactions by individuals, corporations, and tax-exempt pension funds and would apply to stocks, bonds, options, futures, swaps of currency, interest rates, and other assets.

By Bingaman’s calculations, the tax could generate anywhere from \$27 billion to \$62 billion per year, which the federal government would initially spend on education, workforce training, and other nice-sounding liberal programs. He said that its implementation would have to be coordinated with other countries, meaning that it would be the beginning of the Tobin tax.

A congressional resolution in favor of the Tobin tax entitled “Taxing Cross-border Currency Transactions to Deter Excessive Speculation” (H.Con.Res.301) was introduced on April 11, 2000, by Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and the late Sen.

Paul Wellstone (D-MN).

At the United Nations, a panel created by Secretary General Kofi Annan—and including Clinton’s former treasury secretary Robert Rubin—recommended an international tax to generate more foreign-aid money and specifically mentioned the Tobin tax as a possibility. It preferred a global tax on oil and gas “as a way of combating global warming.”

A German U.N. official, Dr. Inge Kaul of the U.N. Development Program (UNDP), has been directing the push for a global tax. An official UNDP report, “Global Public Goods Financing: New Tools for New Challenges,” urges an international tax to finance U.N. environmental programs and “peacekeeping” operations and to “provide transfers [of money] to poor countries” from the United States. It also recommends the establishment of an “international authority” to collect the tax.

Joseph E. Stiglitz, a member of the Clinton Cabinet and chairman of Clinton’s Council of Economic Advisers, has added his voice to this debate, noting that the “protests at meetings of global financial leaders in Seattle, Prague, Washington, and Genoa” have put pressure on the international community for more global action to solve the world’s problems. In his book, *Globalization and Its Discontents*, Stiglitz says that the Tobin tax has attracted “a great deal of attention” in Europe and that “There is now a large body of literature analyzing the tax theoretically and empirically.”

NGO’s do not want to wait for more studies. In a March 2002 report entitled “Global Taxes for Global Priorities,” a powerful U.N.-backed NGO, the Global Policy Forum, declared: “The time for concerted action has come . . . Like-minded governments and citizen groups must advance together towards the goal of global taxes. The U.N. has the authority and capacity to address this agenda, and so to pave the way for a just and sustainable global future.”

As Stiglitz suggested, the NGO street protests are bringing about this development. The BBC has reported that “The Tobin tax has become one of the key demands of many anti-globalization protesters.”

These protests are designed not to dismantle international institutions but to strengthen and expand them. In the name of assisting the Third World and the “oppressed,” the protests provide an excuse for the WTO, World Bank, IMF, and even the United Nations to exercise more control over the global economy and drain even more money from the United States.

Speaking at that NGO conference in Montreal, Robert Jasmine of ATTAC in Canada endorsed the Tobin tax as inevitable, explaining that “We are the rich of the world” and asking, “Do we want to share that wealth or not?” This is the NGO version of “Stick ’em up!” Robin Round, at the same conference, put it somewhat differently, noting that NGO’s “are encouraged by the prospect of the revenue generated by the tax.”

This is a battle for money and power—our money; their power. Any doubt about this was erased at the Monterrey NGO conference, when Lene Schumager of the World Federation of U.N. Associations took the proposal one step further, arguing that Tobin taxes be used to fund the NGO’s themselves.



Shine, Republic

by H.A. Scott Trask

"It is by building our own strength and character at home—not by crusading abroad—that we can contribute most to civilization throughout the world."

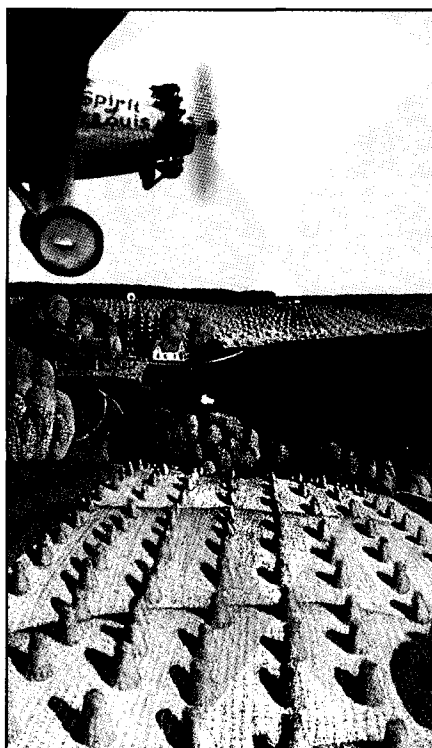
—Col. Charles Lindbergh

A Story of America First: The Men and Women Who Opposed U.S. Intervention in World War II
by Ruth Sarles

Westport, CT: Praeger; 238 pp., \$69.95

The America First Committee of 1940-41 was the largest antiwar organization (800,000 members) in American history. Although it was founded by a group of Yale law students in the summer of 1940 and never lost its patrician character, it was headquartered in Chicago and found its greatest support among Midwesterners. It was also strong in the Mountain states but weakest in the bellicose, Roosevelt-worshipping South. (Of 54 congressmen and senators who spoke under AFC auspices, 33 were from the Midwest; 12, from the West; 8, from the Northeast; and only 1 from the South.) Although anti-New Deal Republicans predominated, the committee included many Democrats, progressives, populists, and socialists. What united them was their desire to frustrate the Roosevelt administration's efforts to join the war in Europe as a full belligerent on the side of, first, the British Empire and, then, communist Russia. Their heroic efforts remind us that there was a time when ordinary Americans believed, still with some reason, that *they* had the right to decide whether their country should remain at peace or go to war; still more of a time when most Americans even cared,

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H. Ward Sterett

one way or the other.

A Story of America First was written by Ruth Sarles (the head of the research bureau and chief congressional liaison for the AFC) in the months following the dissolution of the committee after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. It was never published. Now, thanks to the initiative and financial support of Bill Regnery (grandson of William H. Regnery, the Chicago businessman who was perhaps the largest financial backer of the AFC) and the editorial labors of Bill Kauffman, the manuscript is now available in a superb edition that students and historians of the period will find invaluable. Not only does Sarles' account benefit from her personal participation in the AFC's efforts, it includes primary sources—excerpts from speeches, key letters, and documents and the results of opinion polls taken in the two years before the United States entered the war. Kauffman has

made the book better still by including an editorial introduction, a biographical essay on prominent anti-interventionists, a list of speakers and national committee members of America First, valuable footnotes, and an interview with the founder of the committee, Robert Douglas Stuart, Jr. (The volume also includes a photo essay and editorial cartoons from the *Chicago Tribune*.)

Unlike the Roosevelt administration, whose real foreign objectives were hidden from the American people and whose methods involved smear tactics, deception, subterfuge, and propaganda, America First was open, candid, and truthful. As Lindbergh himself noted during a speech, "those of us who oppose intervention have constantly tried to clarify facts and issues; while the interventionists have tried to hide facts and confuse issues." In a draft of a speech he was to give in Boston, he declared that

it is time to define exactly what we mean by democracy and freedom. These are qualities too sacred to our country, to our traditions, and to our hopes, to be left to the irresponsible use of slogans and propaganda.

This dichotomy has been present from the beginning of the republic. The dominant ruling class has always relied on cant, flattery, and empty promises to stay in power, while ignoring consequences, long-term effects, or the need to make choices. Their opponents (Antifederalists, Old Republicans, the followers of Calhoun, Copperheads, Grover Cleveland Democrats, and America First members), scorning such popular methods,

have found themselves on the losing side of history.

America First leaders were on solid ground when they charged the Roosevelt administration with deception and deceit for trying to maneuver the country into the European war while professing peaceful intentions. The poll results from 1940 and 1941 show that a consistent 80-percent majority opposed going to war against Germany. Charles Lindbergh thundered,

If we can be forced into a foreign war against the opposition of more than four-fifths of our people, then the idea of representative government and democracy will be proved such a failure at home that there will be little use fighting for it abroad.

The Roosevelt administration was well aware of this overwhelming antiwar majority. When his poll numbers began falling in the weeks before the presidential election, Roosevelt uttered his famous pledge to “the mothers and fathers” of America that “your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign war.” Moreover, the Democratic platform pledged the party to a policy of peace; hence the necessity of “maneuvering” the Germans or Japanese into “firing the first shot” (to paraphrase Secretary of War Henry Stimson). According to Lindbergh, “they believed the country could be enticed into the war in very much the same way we were enticed into the last one”: by “involving us in the war step by step” and by creating “a series of incidents which would force us into the actual conflict.”

The polls do reveal that the American public was far from favoring strict neutrality. They overwhelmingly favored a British victory and believed it essential to American security. Although no more than 20 percent wanted to send an American expeditionary force to England and only 24 percent wanted to send the air corps, a small majority favored lending or leasing armaments and even using the Navy to convoy shipments. When asked if they would approve of going to war if England were on the verge of losing to Germany, an astonishing 68 percent said “Yes”; roughly the same percentage also thought that it was more important to help England win, even at the risk of war, than to keep out of it. In short, Roosevelt’s policies of aid “short of war” had

majority support. However, the administration sold these policies by promising that they would help keep the country out of the war raging in Europe.

The AFC denied that the Third Reich threatened North America and that—even if such was its intention—it could ever achieve world domination. On the contrary, they argued that Hitler’s territorial and strategic ambitions were toward Russia and the East (for which there is ample historical evidence) and that, in any event, Germany would have her hands full finishing off the Bolsheviks and policing her conquests for years to come. They argued that it was in England’s best interest to make peace (a judgment now corroborated by revisionist historian John Charmley) with Germany, and that Nazism, which was opposed both to Christianity and to the Western love of freedom, would dissolve from within.

The excerpts from America First speeches reveal the committee’s leaders to have been political prophets of a high order. John Cudahy predicted that American intervention would prolong and deepen the war, and thus lead to the physical and cultural devastation of Europe. Sixty years later, Europe has yet to recover her self-confidence as a distinct civilization and independent world power. John T. Flynn predicted that fighting another European war would give birth to a “new order in America,” the characteristics of which would be distinctly “fascist.” He had in mind not only the ascendancy of “militarism” but a vast and permanent expansion of government power at home, including “vast taxation,” massive government “borrowing,” monetary inflation, and “minute bureaucratic control” of social and economic life. Today, we have all of these things. Others, such as President Henry MacCracken of Vassar College, foresaw an “American world-empire” with permanent “garrisons in Germany, Japan, and Italy.” They are still there. President Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago denounced Roosevelt’s desire to “fight on till the four freedoms ring everywhere” as a “program for perpetual war, war in Latin America, war in the Far East, war in the South Seas.” He pointed out that FDR’s wish “to force the four freedoms upon people who might prefer to do without them” was simply a “revised conception of the White Man’s burden” and a “modern version [of] America’s Manifest Destiny.” Col. Hanford MacNider foresaw “America’s sons . . . policing the rest of the world.” Sen. Rob-

ert Taft predicted that “we will be in war the rest of our lives. We will be assuming the position the English had to take for many years. We will have to maintain the balance of power in Europe.” Before Orwell’s 1984, Lindbergh perceived how the government, not the people, was now deciding the crucial distinction between friend and foe: “One year Russia is a totalitarian monster, and the next year she is a democratic friend.” Everything these men predicted has come true.

Lindbergh joined the AFC in the spring of 1941. As the only American who could rival President Roosevelt in prestige or popularity, he was a huge asset to the committee and quickly became its most sought-after speaker. He also quickly became a lightning rod for charges that the AFC was pro-Nazi and antisemitic. Lindbergh was neither, but he did refuse to return a German medal (the Order of the German Eagle) he had received from Hermann Goering at the American embassy in Berlin in 1938. (Lindbergh had been invited by the U.S. ambassador to a dinner in honor of Goering and was told his presence would be useful in helping to improve German-American relations.) Certainly, Lindbergh cannot be faulted for accepting the medal, and no honorable man would have bowed to the sanctimonious and insistent demands that he later return it.

Lindbergh’s Des Moines speech, in which he charged that “the three most important groups who have been pressing this country to war are the British, the Jewish and the Roosevelt administration,” was another matter. His claim was substantially true, but it was impolitic. It provided ammunition for the interventionists, and it put the national committee on the defensive. The AFC responded that the interventionists were the ones who had introduced the Jewish race issue into the debate over war and peace. It did not help matters, however, to take the bait.

The charges made against Lindbergh should be turned on his accusers. Why was Roosevelt never accused of being pro-Soviet and procommunist? His administration was riddled with Soviet spies and communists (including his close advisor Harry Hopkins); he had great affection for Joseph Stalin and believed the Soviet Union was on the “progressive” side of history; he extended the Lend-Lease Act to that totalitarian dictatorship; and he formed a military and political alliance with a murderous regime. Lindbergh, by

contrast, advocated strict neutrality and noninvolvement.

This is the classic left-wing double standard at work. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes could denounce Lindbergh and Oswald Garrison Villard (a pacifist and a former editor of the *Nation*) for being "Nazi fellow travelers" when a much stronger case could be made that Ickes and Roosevelt were communist fellow travelers. Ickes even had the nerve to accuse Lindbergh "and those like him" of being a "menace . . . to this country and its free institutions"—this from an administration whose economic policies involved drastic infringements on fundamental economic freedoms and whose chief foreign-policy objective was opposed by eight out of ten Americans. The contrast between the vile character of Ickes, a bureaucrat with "the mind of a commissar" (according to Clare Boothe Luce), and Lindbergh, "the best that we are ever apt to produce in the hero line, American style" and a "true white knight through and through" (according to novelist Gore Vidal), could not be greater.

The AFC represented those Americans who believed that their country should tend her own garden instead of attempting to manage the affairs of other peoples, practice democracy at home instead of imposing it abroad, and shun all wars except those waged in self-defense. The War Party, representing the gunfighter and crusader impulses in the American mind, prevailed, and it continues to rule.

A Week of Thursdays

by Philip Jenkins

The Unsleeping Eye: Secret Police and Their Victims

by Robert J. Stove

San Francisco: Encounter Books;
367 pp., \$25.95



Robert Stove has written a readable and intelligent survey of secret policing, which he defines as "governments' surveillance of their own subjects, as distinct from espionage." Sensibly, he does not try to cover every known instance of this behavior but focuses on some celebrated instances, including the French police state of the 18th and 19th centuries, the secret-police apparatus of Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, and the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover. His lament about the lack of research in this area is curious, now that the journal *Intelligence and National Security* is approaching its third decade of publication.

Still, Stove's account is pleasingly balanced, a rare enough virtue at a time when so many writers seek only to cast out the motes in the eyes of their ideological opposites. Often, it is not easy to pin down his particular biases. He is hard on Hoover, who takes the blame for so much of what was required by his political masters, from FDR onward. At the

same time, he has little sympathy for Martin Luther King, Jr., whom he describes as "the opiate of post-Christian America's masses" and whose "seemingly incessant Communist associations" would have attracted the hostility of a much less partisan bureaucrat than J. Edgar. If there is a single political strain running through this book, it is "a healthy aversion to the very notion of Big Government." Stove's focus on the leadership of each separate secret-police apparatus shows alarmingly how systems designed to preserve and protect public security tend in practice to permit the ascent of fundamentally dreadful human beings, who vary only in the degree of their depravity and malice. Felix Dzerzhinsky, Joseph Fouché, Nikolai Yezhov, and Heinrich Himmler are the aristocrats of this horrible world, compared with whom Hoover was a gentle giant.

The criticisms of secret policing are all too obvious: not just the fact that evils are inflicted in the name of national security but that similar practices then tend to become standard in "ordinary" politics and law enforcement. What is alarming about the PATRIOT Act, currently the object of so much opprobrium in the United States, is not that it will do dreadful things to terrorists but that prosecutors will abuse the extensive powers they have been granted to pursue far less heinous offenders and, ultimately, very ordinary citizens indeed. In September 2003, the *New York Times* noted, unsurprisingly, that

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The government is using its expanded authority under the far-reaching law to investigate suspected drug traffickers, white-collar criminals, blackmailers, child pornographers, money launderers, spies and even corrupt foreign leaders.

Yet what is not clear—for Stove, or indeed for most other authors on this topic—is exactly what he wants to see in the realm of secret policing. (With few and negligible exceptions, nobody wants to do without this kind of practice altogether.) Arguably, some kind of secret policing, as defined by Stove, is essential to the survival of any modern state. The harshest critics of John Ashcroft and PATRIOT would not hesitate to suggest that federal agencies should do everything in their power to prevent plots by militias and neo-Nazis to foment a race war, even if

that means such distasteful practices as infiltration, surveillance, and intelligence collection—all before a crime has been committed. Conservative critics who have apoplexy at seeing pro-life groups subjected to this treatment would have no qualms about supporting the penetration and disruption of Al Qaeda or Hezbollah cells on American soil, even if this activity involved bending some legal technicalities. Given the appropriate ideological context, virtually everyone apart from the deepest-dyed libertarian believes that, sometimes, legal niceties have to give way to public safety. Many who would once have disagreed with that proposition changed their minds quite thoroughly between roughly nine and ten Eastern time on the morning of September 11, 2001.

Stove makes the excellent point that the American public and its politicians operate from mixed and contradictory values. People want to be protected from terrorism, yet they want to avoid police forces running out of control and violating human rights. Equally, people believe in surveillance and prevention, yet they rarely acknowledge just how far this acquiescence contradicts basic democratic beliefs about the role of police and the investigation of crime. Of its nature, counterterrorism means trying to prevent actions rather than investigating them after they have occurred. Arresting and punishing everyone who might have been involved in the September 11 conspiracy would be a grossly inadequate and belated response to the crisis. But preventing terrorist crimes before they occur means investigating many people who have not yet engaged in violence, on the supposition that they might do so in the near future. (Remember the film *Minority Report*, with its image of elite police units pursuing offenders thought prone to “pre-crime”?)

In the 1970’s, a British newspaper undertook an enlightening survey of present and former intelligence agents and officials of the secret state, asking them which novel best reflected their professional worlds. Surely, the answer would be a thriller by John Le Carré, or conceivably Frederick Forsyth, or just possibly Ian Fleming? Not at all. The overwhelming favorite was G.K. Chesterton’s *The Man Who Was Thursday*, a phantasmagoric fiction concerning police and anarchists in which all the police prove to be secret anarchists, and *vice versa*. In one dazzling encounter, a member of the special Philosophical Detective

Squad explains the radical new measures to which the government has been driven to protect the nation. Effectively, highly intellectual law enforcers must predict crime by spotting its earliest spiritual antecedents.

The ordinary detective goes to pot-houses to arrest thieves; we go to artistic parties to detect pessimists. The ordinary detective discovers from a ledger that a crime has been committed. We discover from a book of sonnets that a crime will be committed. We have to trace the origin of those dreadful thoughts that drive men on at last to intellectual fanaticism and intellectual crime.

The passage is hilarious yet alarming. At some point, presumably, some modern Philosophical Detective really does have to decide which Muslim activist is a pious mystic, which is a hypocritical windbag, and which is a fanatic hoping to take thousands of American lives with him in his act of self-immolation. That means spotting who will commit crimes in the future and acting to ensure that they do not do so. No law school in American history has ever dealt with those dilemmas.

Equally, agencies face an impossible contradiction when trying to keep watch on terrorist networks. Both public and political leaders demand that such networks be kept under surveillance and, ideally, destroyed before they can carry out their attacks. Yet experienced terrorist groups conceal themselves behind a web of affiliated organizations, through the process known as *insulation*. An effective investigation of terrorism must of necessity involve fighting not just violent organizations but the whole broader support network, which in practice means surveillance and infiltration of numerous innocent-sounding groups pursuing licit causes like labor organization and woman’s rights. Yet many of the people involved in such groups will have no terrorist connections, and agencies leave themselves open to charges of repression, antilabor, and antiwoman attitudes, even of religious persecution—in short, of acting like secret police. As voters and media consumers, we want to be protected, yet we refuse to believe or accept what this effort might entail. We reject the notion of a secret police, yet we demand that the secret police protect us and shriek when they fail.

Stove’s conclusion was written in late 2001, and it has a breathless tone rather out of character with the balanced approach of the rest of the book: “Are we witnessing the re-emergence of outright secret police terror, all carried out—of course—in the name of wartime ‘emergency’ powers?” Well, hardly. We should be disturbed, however, by the ratchet effect so often evident in domestic-security policy. New and severe laws are introduced on a temporary and emergency basis; once the emergency passes, however, the laws remain and provide a foundation on which later regimes can establish even more draconian policies. It will be essential to collect the statements of liberal and Democratic politicians over the next few months, as they denounce the PATRIOT Act and its legislative kin—and then to exhume these worthy sentiments a few years down the road, when a liberal administration faces a domestic crisis from militias or anti-abortion militants. Will PATRIOT have been repealed by then, and full civil liberties restored? Clearly not. The name might change (from PATRIOT to JUSTICE, perhaps), but the laws will remain in place, and so will the bureaucrats who enforce them. Until we are able even to admit the existence of such realities as state security and—yes—secret policing, however, we cannot begin to regulate agencies in a way that might be fair to all shades of political opinion.

Philip Jenkins is the author, most recently, of Images of Terror: What We Can and Can’t Know About Terrorism (Aldine de Gruyter).

A Fig From Smyrna

by Greg Kaza

The Night of the Barbarians: Memoirs of the Communist Persecution of the Slovak Cardinal

by Jan Chryzostom Cardinal Korec, S.J.
Wauconda, Illinois: Bolchazy-Carducci;
476 pp., \$24.95



Jan Chryzostom Cardinal Korec, S.J., was an eyewitness to the 20th century’s most important event: the defeat of Marxism-Leninism in Eastern Europe by the Church established by Jesus Christ.

At age 27, Korec was secretly consecrated as a bishop in Slovakia, a largely Catholic nation of five million. He led the underground Church after the 1948 communist *coup d'état* and was arrested and charged with conspiring against "the People's Democratic System." Korec's indictment read, "As a secret bishop . . . he secretly ordained several seminarians to the priesthood and, until his imprisonment, he directed, led and organized members of the Jesuit religious order." Sentenced to 12 years of hard labor for his Christian Faith, Korec witnessed human nature in many dimensions, including man's cruelty to man. Religious were forced to work in dangerous uranium mines and placed in underground cells where food was only provided every third day. Some were martyred. Last September, Pope John Paul II beatified Sr. Zdenka Schelingova (1916-55), who was hung naked and tortured, and who later died. Many, like Korec, responded to Golgotha by forgiving their persecutors.

Parts of Slovakia, which lies south of Catholic Poland and west of Orthodox Ukraine, were under Ottoman Turk rule in the 17th century. A castle was built to defend Korec's hometown of Bosany against the Muslims, who were defeated by Polish King Jan Sobieski III at Vienna in 1683. Three centuries later, Christians faced a new challenge: Marxism-Leninism, which tried to erase the thousand-year legacy of Christianity from Slovakia, which traces back to Saints Cyril and Methodius. Slovak communist leader Dr. Gustav Husak explained that "it will be necessary to make drastic interventions in many Catholic institutions, which are the breeding grounds for anti-democratic concepts and influences on the broad masses."

The Marxist attack on "Vatican imperialism" took many forms. In an attempt to divide the Church from within, agents infiltrated seminaries to study theology. They established a state-controlled church and press staffed by collaborators. These attacks culminated on April 13, 1950, the night of the barbarians, when the Marxists eliminated all Slovak religious orders and their monasteries. Korec writes, "Neither the furious attacks of the Tartars nor the expansion of the Islamic Turkish Empire wreaked as much havoc on Czech and Slovak history as the events of that night."

Korec's most critically acclaimed work is *The Church in the History Of Slovakia* (1994). The son of working-class parents,

he wrote an early Slovak critical analysis of Marxist philosophy, "The Philosophic Grounds of Dialectic Materialism" (1947). Despite his proletarian roots, Korec was targeted by a hypocritical Marxist system. "Ironically, when the worker class began to come to power," Korec writes, "I was blamed for being against the 'working class.'" He spent the 1950's employed as a manual worker, librarian, watchman, and elevator repairman while secretly leading the Church. "The ordination to the priesthood under special circumstances is an extremely serious matter, to be handled with responsibility," he notes. "It would be impossible to allow a bishop to disappear in jail each time an ordination took place." In 1960, Korec was imprisoned for his secret work. (He spent most of his incarceration in Czechoslovakia's notorious Valdice prison, full of *mukls*, men destined for liquidation.) Korec was a "category three prisoner," the toughest group. As a worker and as a prisoner, he encountered such men as Sullo, an agnostic German machinist and lapsed Lutheran, and Zdeno B., a young man unable to pray the Our Father. A fellow prisoner told him of the fate of collaborationist churchman Holdos, whose usefulness to the regime had ended. "Welcome, red Archbishop!" the prisoners shouted at him.

The book's greatest contribution is its documentation of the religious persecution undertaken by the Marxist regime in Czechoslovakia. Victims included monks of the Eastern Rite Basilian order; Pavol Peter Gajdic, a martyr of the Byzantine Rite Catholic Church; and the Jesuit priest Zgarbik, who perished in an asthma attack, ignored by prison staff. Octogenarian Slovak Bishop Jan Vojtassak was forced to read a document that termed him a "treacherous bishop." Vojtassak defiantly wrote in the margin, "Lie!" He was later released but forbidden to return to Slovakia.

The Church responded in a Christian manner:

Life shortened by suffering has much greater value and offers more to souls than a long life and a comfortable position which participates in the destruction of Christ's work, straining Faith with heresies. This weakened life of Faith would retreat into a position of paganism.

The West should heed this warning. Korec survived interrogations and impris-

onment through prayer and scriptural reflection.

[T]he main direction of the life of priests in prison was characterized by a lack of freedom, uncertainty, and the constant fear that we would be attacked, kicked outside, inspected while completely nude, or that they would start screaming at us and force us to work in brigades.

Still, priests viewed prison as part of their pastoral mission and Christ's special plan for their lives.

Korec's joy in the face of Marxist persecution is shown in a passage where he describes a package of figs:

As it happens so often in jail, one notices every detail, and I noticed that the place of origin was printed on the little label: "Izmir," Smyrna. I rejoiced in my spirit! How little one needs to be happy, especially if he has been in jail for so many weeks! How little it takes to make him rejoice! I immediately saw in my mind Saint Polycarp from Smyrna and St. Paul the apostle, who had walked through these places during his apostolic travels. I told myself excitedly, "This fruit I have here in the cell . . . grew on the soil on which these precious men of the first Church walked! The apostle of nations, Paul, and the bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp, who personally knew Saint John the Apostle!

Released from prison in the Prague Spring of 1968, Korec went on pilgrimage to Velehrad and settled in Bratislava. He visited Rome for the first time in 1969 to meet Pope Paul VI, who blessed him, "*Con gli auguri.*"

"The Czechoslovakian Marxist regime monitored Korec until it fell in 1989. His written work after release is voluminous and includes two other memoirs. Christians in the West can learn much from Cardinal Korec about the Church's successful struggle against Marxism in Eastern Europe.

Greg Kaza served three terms (1993-98) in the Michigan House of Representatives.



Dies Irae

by Mark G. Brennan

Financial Reckoning Day: Surviving the Soft Depression of the 21st Century

by William Bonner with Addison Wiggin
Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.;
306 pp., \$27.95



You have seen him countless times as he quickly slips through airport-security metal detectors while our federal *Stasi* wave their wands over screaming three-year-olds and go through every bag and belonging of docile Midwestern librarians. He puts his shoes back on, slips his *USA Today* back under his arm, and pulls out his cell phone to call headquarters, barking sentences that inevitably include one of the following words: *synergy*, *strategic*, *optimized*. He is the present-day Man In the Grey Flannel Suit.

Correction: He is now wearing a pair of tan Dockers® Pleated Mobile™ Pants with Stain Defender™, topped by his favorite oversized Greg Norman Collection golf shirt. When he finally boards and settles down into his aisle seat (preferably toward the front, as “I am an Elite Club Member”), he has already determined his reading material based on the length of the flight. For flights of less than two hours, the aforementioned *USA Today*, followed by the in-flight magazine and a dog-eared copy of *SkyMall* usually suffice. For longer trips, he will invariably pull out something from the dreaded “business press.” There has never been a better argument for staying close to home.

Fortunately, for our present-day corporate warrior, there is a book incorrectly displayed in the business section of bookstores throughout the country (and, more importantly, in airport bookstores that seem to sell nothing but work-related books). If he were to select William Bonner and Addison Wiggin’s *Financial Reckoning Day: Surviving the Soft Depression of the 21st Century*, he should stay on the plane until he finishes the book, which explains our current economic predicament in a way that merits serious consideration—especially from regular readers of *Chronicles*.

Financial Reckoning Day attributes the booming stock market of the late 1990’s

and its subsequent crash neither to Clinton’s economic acumen nor to the *Wall Street Journal*’s editorial suggestions. Instead, the polymath authors touch on disparate but historically paramount factors such as the French Revolution, the 17th-century fiat-currency bug John Law, and Bretton Woods. They prove that “the world is funnier than you think”—and certainly funnier than anything you have read recently in *Business Week*. Never has the current state of the economy been so lucidly and learnedly explicated from the proper historical perspective, one that stretches back not to Reagan’s tax cuts and the bull market that began in 1982 (the hackneyed version) but to the Enlightenment and its effect on man’s behavior and understanding of the world. Addison Wiggin’s master’s degree in philosophy from St. John’s College in Santa Fe, a program based on a Great Books curriculum, surely came in handy in this endeavor.

“People get not what they expect but what they deserve” is an adage repeated throughout the book, and, by the end, readers will deem it axiomatic in regard to the financial markets and history of the West. In chapters devoted to paper money, consumer debt, Alan Greenspan, and the lunacy of collective behavior and demography, Bonner and Wiggin hilariously illustrate the propriety of this simple heuristic. For instance, countries often print currency in the expectation of alleviating economic stagnation. Weimar Germany, 1990’s Russia, and the Argentina of 2001 each fired up her presses and issued paper currency, which, paradoxically, was not worth the paper it was printed on by the time the ink had dried. Hence, if governments insist on debasing their currencies and eschewing a precious-metal backing, they are nothing more than counterfeiters and reap the appropriate reward—worthless paper. The same goes for “investors” who bought internet stocks trading at record prices in late 1999 and early 2000.

Japan takes center stage for much of the book. Although there is only one chapter devoted to it, the authors repeatedly compare Japan with the present-day United States. The parallels are too apocalyptic to dismiss as the rantings of self-proclaimed visionaries. The typical Japanese citizen in the late 1980’s did not invest a large percentage of his net worth in stocks and prudently maintained his high rate of savings even as the Japanese stock market ascended above

the Rising Sun. Conversely, his American counterpart drove to Circuit City in his gas-guzzling SUV to plunk down one of his many credit cards to buy the latest \$6,000 plasma TV. By the way, the next time you see that SUV bearing down on you in your rearview mirror, remember this: According to the Federal Reserve’s website, in 1998 the average new-car loan totaled \$19,083. By June 2003, our profligate consumer’s loan averaged \$26,945. In other words, he may be tailgating you to avoid the rolling snowball of debt that is quickly gaining on his own tail. Let us hope that he can rein in his spending before interest rates rise and choke off his consumption and, thereby, our entire consumer-centric economy. (Before that happens, however, someone please remind him to max out his home-equity loan, since it is tax deductible.)

I would be remiss if I did not point out the wonderful sense of humor displayed throughout the book. In describing the horrors of today’s Social Security System as “something Goya might have done on a bad day . . . or Andre Serrano on a good one,” or the overheated GDP and productivity numbers of the internet boom years as looking like “someone with too many facelifts—grotesque and unrecognizable,” the authors prove that one can truly laugh at his own impending demise. Since few if any racial extortionists or left-wing academics are likely to read this erudite book, I suspect that the authors’ politically incorrect yet felicitous simile describing a boring world that is “as dull and earnest as a poem by Maya Angelou” will not result in any protests by the terminally aggrieved.

As a professional investor, I rely on Bonner and Wiggin’s daily (free!) e-mail to provide an autopsy report on the previous day’s action in the financial markets. While the authors often repeat the trite epigram “A fool and his money are soon parted,” I find the variation “A fool and his money are invited everywhere” to be more admonitory. As the authors explain, the behavior of crowds is frequently, if not always, foolish. Since there comes a time when each of us finds himself amid an irrational, trend-following crowd, this book provides an antidote. The next time a broker invites you to invest in the latest hot mutual fund, to attend a “no money down” real-estate seminar, or to borrow 125 percent of the equity in your house, reread *Financial Reckoning Day*. But read it first now, if only to discover the authors’ lone sagacious prediction, aptly

named "The Trade of the Decade."

Mark G. Brennan writes from New York City.

The 11th Commandment

by Steven J. Willett

**The Geography of Thought:
How Asians and Westerners Think
Differently . . . and Why**

by Richard E. Nisbett
New York: The Free Press;
263 pp., \$24.00



The *Geography of Thought* is an exercise in cultural polarization that makes two basic claims: There are profound cognitive differences between Westerners and Asians; and these differences have maintained themselves with striking continuity for thousands of years. Richard Nisbett, a social psychologist at the University of Michigan, locates the two utterly different modes of thought in two cultural continua (or "*self-perpetuating homeostatic systems*"): one running from ancient Greece to the modern West; another, from ancient China to East Asia. India and the Muslim world, which apparently do not fit into his bipolar scheme, have been excluded. The two subjects of Nisbett's study are, however, severely circumscribed: East Asia refers only to China, Japan, and Korea, while the West embraces only those peoples who have inherited European culture.

Nisbett canvasses a large body of psychological experiments, including many of his own performed in the United States and China, for evidence to support his claim that Westerners and Asians differ fundamentally in their beliefs about the nature of the world, as well as in their ways of perceiving and understanding it.

In his first chapter, Nisbett develops the crude outlines of the dichotomy by contrasting the Aristotelian syllogism with the Chinese Tao. The Greeks acquired a remarkable sense of personal agency and individualism from their long history as pirates and traders; that individualism, in turn, fueled a tradition of debate and rational analysis. From a social system grounded in debate came rhetoric

to structure the search for truth; from a penchant for analysis came logic to investigate objects and their attributes. By contrast, the Chinese, living in agrarian collectives, emphasized harmony and communal agency. Chinese social practices are reflected in the philosophies of Confucianism, Taoism, and later Buddhism (more properly a religion), which stressed the importance of harmony and discouraged abstract speculation about salient objects. The contrast, then, is between independent Greeks engaged in fractious debate to discover truth—or, at least, the best course of action—and interdependent Chinese searching for Confucian social and Taoist natural harmony. Finally, Nisbett surveys science and medicine, comparing the Greek invention of nature, syllogistic logic, and intrusive surgery with the Chinese development of dialecticism and holistic medical treatment.

This summary, unfortunately, cannot suggest the muddle Nisbett has concocted here. He mixes fact with cultural caricature, fills national stereotypes with historical errors, fails to provide any documentation for much of his sweeping *Kulturkritik*, and commits some serious linguistic errors along the way. The Greek language, for example, does not itself encourage a focus on attributes and the reduction of attributes to abstractions. The Chinese language supposedly lacks the ability of Indo-European languages to form abstract nouns because, as Nisbett asserts, it has no words for "size" or "whiteness." But it certainly does. Virtually every linguistic statement in the book is wrong.

Chapter 2 traces the social origin of mind by an account that is essentially materialistic: "That is, it attempts to explain cultural facts in terms of physical ones." The justification for this mental evolution is provided in a basket note holding 11 citations, without any page references. (Indeed, Chapters 2-8 are largely devoid of such references, making it hard to assess Nisbett's use of sources.) The evolution described here moves by stages from ecology through economy, social structure, attention (that which society attends to), folk metaphysics, and epistemology before it culminates in cognitive processes. Nisbett then calls his "account" a scientific theory, because it leads to testable predictions. But what are the tests showing that economic and social factors can affect perceptions? Nisbett cites only four old papers, dating from between 1971

and 1975 and lacking a basis in modern research into cognition or brain science.

The book's third chapter is quite otiose, reviewing the social-psychological dichotomy created in the first two chapters to show that the differences between modern Western and Asian societies would "tend to sustain or even create those different patterns even if they had not been present in ancient times." So the materialist account of social mind was not necessary after all! The polarization between Westerners and Asians is merely heightened with more contemporary detail. Along the way, we come on more misstatements about the Japanese language (use of pronouns; lack of a word for "self-esteem") and simplistic assertions about Japan (deficient in concept of a lively discussion; reliance on *awase* or harmonious fitting-in). Nisbett does allow that his generalizations do not apply to all members of a group, but he insists that variations "should not blind us to the fact that there are real differences, substantial on average, between East Asians and people of European culture."

On balance, the evidence for these two monolithic divisions, with their associated cognitive differences, relies on rudimentary summary, exaggeration, and wholesale exclusion of counterevidence. More specifically, many of the contentions about Greek and Chinese philosophy are trivial, imprecise, or wrong.

Nisbett tries to show that social realities "might produce very different patterns of literally *seeing* the world." He recites (in numbing detail) the experiments he and others have conducted to prove that the cultural dichotomy produces divergent cognitive processes between Westerners and Asians. Chapter 6 is marred by a large number of further linguistic errors, including claptrap about the greater use of nouns in Western languages and verbs in East Asian languages—which is supposed to prove that Westerners are more object-oriented and Asians more relationship-oriented. Nisbett here confuses the rate of learning nouns and verbs in the two language groups with the absolute prominence of nouns and verbs in them. Although he ostensibly rejects the discredited Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (linguistic structure affects habitual thinking processes), absurd statements such as the following actually validate it: "Western languages force a preoccupation with focal objects as opposed to context."

This book suffers from a fatal methodological weakness: Much of it is based

on experiments in which college students were placed in a room and given diagrams, pictures, printed statements, or other stimuli to which they had to respond in some way. This is a customary practice in social psychology, to which many anthropologists have raised strong objections. Here, it means Nisbett has generalized from college students to Westerners and Asians in the aggregate. He ignores counterevidence and only occasionally admits doubts about the problematic character of his two categories. The statistical evaluation of the experiments is also problematic, since Nisbett never defines what numerical difference establishes a clear divide between Westerners and Asians. In many experiments, the difference is relatively small, and in some that were broken down by nationalities, the French, Italians, and Germans drift very close to the Asians.

The Geography of Thought almost inclines me to augment Auden's Decalogue in "Under Which Lyre" with an 11th commandment to match his own on social science: "Thou shalt not commit a social psychology."

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Mishmash

by Karina Rollins

Mismatch: The Growing Gulf Between Women and Men

by Andrew Hacker

New York: Scribner; 228 pp., \$25.00



To judge from its title, we could reasonably expect this book to be about the *growing gulf* between women and men. Yet Andrew Hacker, a professor of political science at Queens College, spends much of the book reciting differences between the sexes that have *always* existed. With cumbersome detail (as if imparting new and fresh information), Hacker describes the varying emotional makeups of men and women; their difference in sex drives; the male tendency to commit rape, which females do not exhibit; and the female proclivity to stay home to rear children. How enlightening.

Though he never once uses the word

feminist, feminism is the worldview Hacker largely presents. (The SAT is biased against girls; women have to fight the Old Boys' Club in their careers.) Cartoonishly, he presents liberals as freedom-loving skeptics of big business and conservatives as gun-toting morality censors. In his world, women are Democrats, and men are Republicans. Hacker states that a natural affinity between the sexes has merely been assumed and that women have generally paid an unpleasant price:

The burden usually fell on the woman to make the pairing work. . . . It was the woman's job to listen and understand; to sympathize when he suffered setbacks, to cheer his minor triumphs . . . If he asked about her day, his questions were usually perfunctory; nor was it always evident that he was absorbing her answers.

Hacker points to one aspect that has been changing over the past decades: More and more women have been entering the workforce as equal partners of men. And a big reason for today's divorce rates, Hacker believes, is that fewer women display "the readiness . . . to subsume themselves or limit their ambitions to make life more congenial for men." Because society now offers career and lifestyle options that women did not enjoy before, "it is becoming increasingly difficult to describe today's women and men as a natural match." The reason for this disparity, Hacker argues, is not so much the newfound freedoms of women, which he applauds, but that women "are finding that all too many men lack the qualities they desire" and that "only rarely do men show themselves disposed to change in more than marginal ways."

He also argues that men feel their masculinity threatened by successful women who "expect full equality, not just legally and in the economic arena, but in the holistic sense of being perceived as an integral human being." Some men have admitted in surveys that their image of manhood is shaken when their wives make more money than they do. Others continue to believe that a woman's place is, indeed, in the home. The problem with *Mismatch*, however, is that its thesis—rising divorce is the result of today's women not putting up with boorish men—is not what the book is actually about. Since Hacker's claim remains largely unsubstantiated by the informa-

tion he provides, it is hard to tell just what the book is about.

Ostensibly in an effort to be comprehensive, Hacker forces page after tedious page of minutiae on his readers—SAT scores, boys' knack for math, girls' knack for literature, male majors, female majors; he tosses around so many percentages and numbers in almost every paragraph as to make every woman's, and at least some men's, head spin; he includes charts and more charts, even two sample SAT questions. All this to make the point that more women than men are getting bachelor's degrees and that "another mismatch is in the making, as fewer men share the education and interests that are accruing to women."

Hacker then goes on to discuss just about anything that seems to pop into his mind: the existence of rape (no evidence of whether the incidence of this crime is rising or not); basketball and hip-hop music (their popularity among white teenage boys is great); race (there has been an increase in the number of interracial couples); homosexuality (the number of openly homosexual men has risen since the 1970's); the death penalty (Hacker believes it to be racist). One wonders why he did not throw in his favorite pasta recipe, too.

Turning to one of his favorite subjects—white men's alleged fear of blacks' superior sexual virility—he writes that,

In earlier times, white men responded to these fears with periodic lynchings . . . Today, the surrogate for lynching is imprisonment. As of this writing, almost a million black men languish in the nation's prisons, comprising more than half of the inmate population. To be sure, each one is there for having violated a law. Yet when the racial ratio rises that high, it makes sense to consider whether black men are also being locked in cages to suppress a sexual threat.

For heaven's sake, did the folks at Scribner not provide this man with an editor?

Mismatch is essentially a hodge-podge of the most vapid clichés that pass for deep thinking on Hacker's part. Billed by Hacker as "intended for an intelligent audience interested in a serious subject," this book is an insult to any such person.

Karina Rollins is a senior editor at the American Enterprise.

Enthusiastic Democracy

Less than a month after President Bush unbosomed his latest reflections on political philosophy before the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, one of the latest victims of his administration's crusade to foster the "global democratic revolution" in Iraq was grousing that what the administration planned for his country simply wasn't democratic enough. The Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, leader of the 15 million Shiite Muslims of Iraq, some 60 percent of the population, announced his opposition to the neat little blueprint for "democracy" that the president's neocon policy wonks had decided would be suitable for the Iraqi rabble. The grand ayatollah's dyspeptic reaction is entirely understandable. In a country where the people he represents constitute the majority, democracy or something more or less resembling it would be welcome to him—at least until he and his colleagues win the elections.

That, however, is clearly not the case with others in the Land of the Great Cake-walk. "This is a society comprised of [sic] Sunni, Shiites, Kurds, Assyrians, Christians and others," one member of the "Governing Council," as the media calls the puppet government set up by Mr. Bush's viceroys, told the *Washington Post*. "The ayatollah is a very important man of the Shiite society . . . but others have an opinion too. There must be a consensus among all communities." Of course, there is no consensus among all communities, which is why there has never been a "democracy" in Iraq in the first place and why gentlemen like Saddam Hussein were able to rule it at all.

Whatever happens in Iraq, the President's speech to the NED pointed to similar debacles for the apostles of "global democratic revolution" far into the future. Mr. Bush sang,

The advance of freedom is the calling of our time; it is the calling of our country. From the Fourteen Points to the Four Freedoms, to the Speech at Westminster, America has put our power at the service of principle. We believe that liberty is the design of nature; we believe that liberty is the direction of

history. We believe that human fulfillment and excellence come in the responsible exercise of liberty. And we believe that freedom—the freedom we prize—is not for us alone, it is the right and the capacity of all mankind.

At no time, of course, did the President bother to define "democracy" or its relationship to the other sacred cow of his speech, "liberty." He spoke of both as more or less indistinguishable, even though both classical political theory as well as the conservative thought of which the President purports to be a more compassionate representative have always distinguished them sharply. If we are indeed going to embark on the sort of "revolution" Mr. Bush demands, pushing democracy onto non-Western societies at the point of our bayonets, then it would be best if we at least knew what it is we are pushing and what it would look like once we have pushed it.

The high priests of "global democracy," of course, are the neoconservatives, who have been plotting the war against Iraq for years and who were peddling "global democracy" to President Reagan well before that. During the Cold War, when not a few of our closest and most dependable allies were distinctly nondemocratic, ranging from such principled statesmen as General Pinochet and Francisco Franco to outright gangsters such as Raphael Trujillo who were only marginal improvements over Lyndon Johnson and Bill Clinton, we simply could not afford to chatter too much about "spreading democracy." Serious efforts to promote it by demanding the introduction of such quaint Anglo-American customs as regular elections and letting the opposition out of prison only played into the hands of the communists, who understood how to exploit such superstitions for their own purposes. Once the Cold War was over, however, the United States enjoyed the leisure to launch its own campaign of political subversion by "democracy" throughout the world, and, today, there is hardly one of our old anti-communist sidekicks, be he statesman or thug, who remains in his saddle.



Whatever democracy as we are engineering it abroad might be, we must look to the neoconservatives to explain it to us. Thus, in the September issue of *Commentary*, Joshua Muravchik (in the article I discussed in this column last month) expatiated on the importance of "democracy" to his neoconservative comrades. Digressing from his explanation of why anyone who criticizes the neocons must be an antisemite, Mr. Muravchik discussed the question of the relationship between neoconservatism and liberalism:

A final distinction may reflect neoconservatism's vestigial links with liberalism. This is the enthusiasm for democracy. Traditional conservatives are more likely to display an ambivalence toward this form of government, an ambivalence expressed centuries ago by the American founders. Neoconservatives tend to harbor no such doubts.

Unfortunately, however, Mr. Muravchik defined democracy no more precisely than Mr. Bush did a month or so later, though his comment remains helpful. It tells us that neocons disagree with the Framers of the Constitution as well as with today's traditional conservatives, which is what their paleoconservative critics have been saying for decades and what neoconservatives almost always try to deny, as when they are denouncing paleos as "unpatriotic conservatives" or calling Pat Buchanan a "leftist." Nevertheless, given the inadequacies of Mr. Muravchik's explanations of democracy, we shall have to address the question ourselves.

One reason *democracy* is difficult to define is that it has come to mean several different things. First, of course, it means

“rule of the people,” and every schoolboy knows that the “people” do not and cannot really and directly rule, so they have to have “representatives” to govern for them, which is what we do in this country and in other democracies such as Great Britain. But then, *democracy* is also often used in the sense of a “constitutional democracy,” which is more or less like what the Founding Fathers meant by the term *republic* and which, in turn, descends from the classical political ideal of the “mixed regime” of Aristotle, Cicero, Polybius, and others. In this sense, it means a government in which the three elements of political society—the One, the Few, and the Many—rule together, either checking one another’s excesses and tendencies to tyranny or contributing their own distinctive virtues to the government and society they establish. In this sense of the term, a sense with which most paleoconservatives are perfectly comfortable, *democracy* as the rule of the Many is but one part, balanced by the power of the other two. By calling the “republic” or “mixed government” by the name of “democracy,” however, those who claim to favor the unchecked rule of the Many are able to promote the erroneous belief that what is really a “republic” is in fact or should become a pure “democracy,” in which aristocratic and monarchic elements are eliminated or unimportant. That is more or less what has happened to the American Republic, which is why Mr. Muravchik is correct that both the Framers and modern paleoconservatives were and are “ambivalent” about it. They are “ambivalent” and not outright opposed simply because it usually takes a few minutes to figure out what those chattering about “democracy” actually mean. Once it becomes clear (if it ever does), there is no ambivalence. “Democracy” as the unchecked power of the Many is probably the most dangerous, tyrannical, and evil form of government ever imagined, and no paleoconservative advocates or supports it. Nor, for that matter, do neoconservatives. Let there be no illusion that such *soi-disant* enthusiasts of “democracy” as Mr. Muravchik and his peers at *Commentary* harbor any sympathy for the real Rule of the Many in American society, let alone in such societies as that of Iraq. Not long before the war with Iraq commenced, my old boss at the *Washington Times*, Arnaud de Borchgrave, a lifelong expert on Middle East politics, wrote that “There is little realization in Washington that democracy [in Iraq and the Middle East] would

make the region even more anti-American than it already is by giving free rein to Islamist fundamentalist extremists.” Official Washington may not realize this, but you can bet your box cutters the neocons do, whatever “enthusiasm” for democracy they spit up in public. Nor, of course, do they want anything like the Rule of the Many in the United States, with the specter of what neocon columnist Charles Krauthammer last year called the “white trash vote” actually deciding what happens in Washington.

So if the neoconservatives do not really want “democracy” in the sense of what the Framers and most paleoconservatives call a “republic,” and, if they do not really want “democracy” in the sense of the actual “Rule of the Many,” in what sense exactly do they want or wax enthusiastic for “democracy” at all, and what the hell do they mean when they dangle poor Mr. Bush in front of audiences of grown-ups and make him gabble on about pushing the “global democratic revolution”?

What they mean by “democracy” is nothing more than the system of dominance that came to prevail in the United States and the Western world in the last half of the last century. That system has nothing to do with elections, opposition parties, civil and political rights, or “liberty,” nor does it have anything to do with political theory, ancient or modern. “Democracy,” as the neocons and the President and most others who are enthusiastic about it use the word, means the centralized leviathan state under the firm and unqualified control of the managerial bureaucracy and those political forces able to influence it. It also means a particular kind of social and economic order, one largely stripped of traditional and even natural (sexual and racial) distinctions and identities and traditional moral practices and devoted largely to the mass production of consumer goods and the mass consumption of what is produced, and it requires not only a centralized and increasingly totalitarian bureaucratic state to manage it politically and economically but a sister leviathan to invent and manage a cultural order that explains, accelerates, and animates it. “Democracy,” in this sense, is largely what neoconservative Ben Wattenberg means by calling the United States today the “first universal nation”—universal, not just because of the mass immigration that has helped erase our cultural and ethnic distinctiveness but because the invented “culture” and economy of Produce and Consume

is universal and global and is intended to replace every other real government, economy, and culture on earth. That is what the “global democratic revolution” means.

Around the world, people tap their feet to American music, watch American movies and television, follow American fashions, are enthralled with American culture, speak American, emulate American economic and political ideas. We even export political consultants, briefcases chock-full of 30-second commercials. All this influence is increasing exponentially as the American-driven communications grid spreads everywhere. It should not be taken lightly; it already won the Cold War for us.

Of course, not one item of the mass-produced garbage of which Mr. Wattenberg is so proud is American at all. It just happens to have been produced and consumed (at first) in America, and the “Americanization” of the planet that he chirps about is, in fact, not real Americanization but merely the obliteration of the rest of the planet’s civilizations by an apparatus of force and mass manipulation that has long since disengaged itself from any particular nation, race, region, and culture.

It also ought to be clear that “spreading democracy” in this sense is not only entirely possible but entirely likely. “Democracy” as a balanced and ordered republican system of governance—the historic sense in which most Americans even today continue to use the term—cannot be exported or “spread” at all, because it is indeed culturally unique, the product of a particular race, culture, and historical experience peculiar to Western Europe and North America and not, as Mr. Bush’s speechwriters warbled, “the design of nature” or “the direction of history.” Attempts to export or even to emulate it very seriously usually end in catastrophes or merely fizzle out and are forgotten, but, since what the neoconservatives really mean by “democracy” is little more than a species of political and cultural imperialism, there is no doubt that it can be successfully exported and that it is being exported, good and hard, to all the places and peoples Mr. Bush and the global democrats have on their hit list. Like what we are experiencing today in Iraq, it will no doubt be a cakewalk.

◀◀

Fiddling While Rockford Burns

There's a big brown cloud in the city,
And the countryside's a sin.
The price of life is too high to give up,
It's gotta come down again.
When worldwide war is over and done,
And the dream of peace comes true.
We'll all be drinking that free Bubble Up,
And eating that rainbow stew.

Normally, I wouldn't think of quoting the Poet of Walden Pond alongside the Bard of the Working Man, but Thoreau's words seem to share a certain kinship with the anti-utopian sentiments that underlie Merle Haggard's bouncy lyrics:

The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation; a stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind.

Driving past the strip malls and big-box stores of East State Street, watching cars dart in and out of 40-acre parking lots as their occupants desperately take advantage of the after-Christmas sales, I have to wonder whether Thoreau could ever have conceived of a day when "the games and amusements of mankind" consisted primarily of buying, on credit, cheap Chinese-made products at Wal-Mart.

While Rockford "consumers" were being taken advantage of by chain stores based anywhere but here, the *New York Times* was visiting Rockford. In an article published on January 4, entitled "The Joyless Recovery," Edmund L. Andrews showed a greater understanding of the challenges facing Rockford than the entire staff of the *Rockford Register Star* (with the notable exception of political editor Chuck Sweeny, who, over the past year, has experienced something of an epiphany about the effects of free trade on his hometown). Worse yet, Andrews seems to have his finger more firmly on the pulse of Rockford than our own po-

litical and business leaders, who continue to ignore the obvious, even though the quiet desperation on the face of the average Rockfordian shows that he knows the truth: Rockford, as we have known it, is dying.

Back in the late 1960's and early 70's, *per capita* income in Rockford was among the highest in the nation. Ten years later, unemployment was over 20 percent. Today, one of Rockford's ZIP codes—61104—is the ninth-poorest white ZIP code in the United States.

One of my earliest columns on Rockford, "A Month in the Life of the Industrial Midwest" (April 2001), examined a month's worth of stories from the business section of the *Register Star*, a month during which the Rockford area lost two businesses, well over 4,000 manufacturing jobs, and over 100 retail positions. In the preceding 18 months, nearly 20 area companies had "downsized." After the column appeared, one of our East Coast readers sent us an article from the *Washington Post* that seemed to contradict my pessimistic outlook, arguing that Rockford was actually successfully converting from a manufacturing-based economy to a service-based one. Now that the area has lost an additional 20,000 manufacturing jobs and unemployment is approaching levels not seen since the recession of the early 1980's (which locally amounted to a depression), no one is making that claim.

No one, that is, except Robert Levin, the executive director of the Council of 100, a local business group founded in 1982, in the throes of that earlier recession. The council essentially functions as the local equivalent of an international NGO, lobbying government for policies favorable to business and attempting to attract new businesses to the Rockford area. And, like many NGO's, it has been funded (to the tune of \$100,000 per year since 1983) by government.

In theory, the Council of 100 is not a bad idea: Bring the heads of some of the largest businesses in Rockford together with government officials to increase cooperation in order to revitalize the local economy. And there's no doubt that the council, working hand-in-glove



with Democratic Mayor John McNamara throughout the 1980's, helped create the "development" on East State Street that put Rockford on the road to "recovery."

Throughout the 1990's, however, the council, along with other nongovernmental organizations such as the Rockford Area Chamber of Commerce and the Rockford Area Association of Realtors, played along with McNamara's successor, Democratic Mayor Charles Box, and endorsed a series of tax increases (both those imposed illegally by a federal judge and those presented to the voters through referenda) that financed Rockford's disastrous 12-year-long school-desegregation lawsuit. And long after Rockford regained an uneasy economic footing, the council continued to focus on retail and service-sector expansion, to the detriment of small manufacturing, long the backbone of Rockford's economy.

Today, the Council of 37 (as local radio talk-show host Chris Bowman refers to the dwindling and increasingly ineffective organization) is dominated by banks, healthcare providers, and media outlets, with the occasional developer, politician, and university president thrown in for good measure. The number of manufacturers represented on the council has declined, in part because of the loss of manufacturing in Rockford, in part because many of the largest manufacturers remaining in Rockford are now subsidiaries of companies based elsewhere, and in part because Rockford's small manufacturers have no reason to believe that the council represents their interests.

And so it was no surprise to read that Levin told the *New York Times*, quite matter-of-factly, that "We are in a global economy, and we are in the throes of a major transformation." Rockford can simply "reinvent" itself once more. If retail cannot sustain the local economy—since

credit cards do have limits, and the Chinese worker who is now performing your job is unlikely to pay your bill for you—then Rockfordians can work at a state-of-the-art telephone call center (until Bombay makes MCI an offer it can't refuse) or load packages on planes for UPS at eight dollars an hour, four hours a night (plus benefits). Levin probably takes Merle's lyrics at face value, too.

When they find out how to burn
water,
And the gasoline car is gone.
When an airplane flies without any
fuel,
And the sunlight heats our home.
One of these days when the air
clears up,
And the sun comes shining
through.
We'll all be drinking that free Bubble Up,
And eating that rainbow stew.

Roger McGrath has noted sadly that, for years, people outside of California believed that they would be unaffected by the problems caused by mass immigration. Now, when it may be too late, they are finally beginning to wake up.

The same is true of Rockford's plight, which has been featured recently not only in the *New York Times* but in the *Village Voice* ("Attention, Wal-Mart Voters," December 3-9, 2003), the *Boston Globe* ("The Lights Are Going Off: Lost Jobs in Rockford, Ill., Underscore Free Trade Issue," October 20, 2003), and even the *Australian Financial Review* ("Down the Gurgler," November 5, 2003). It seems that outsiders are beginning to realize what some in this city have known all along: Rockford is a microcosm of America, not only politically and ethnically but economically. Is it too much to hope that, someday, Rockford's leadership will understand this as well?

You don't have to get high to get
happy,
Just think about what's in store.
When people start doing what they
ought to be doing,
Then they won't be booing no
more.
When a President goes through
the White House door,
Does what he says he'll do.
We'll all be drinking that free Bubble Up,
And eating that rainbow stew.

An Update on St. Mary's

Over the past several months, St. Mary's Oratory has occupied a prominent space in this column. Over Labor Day weekend, when St. Mary's was threatened by Winnebago County with possible demolition to help make way for a \$130-million jail, county-board member Mary Ann Aiello and local architect Gary Anderson petitioned the Rockford Historic Preservation Commission to grant local landmark status to the church. After the immediate threat from the county had passed, Aiello and Anderson continued the landmark proceedings over the objections of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockford, which regards landmark designation as an unconstitutional infringement on the rights of the Church. Bishop Thomas Doran, the ordinary of Rockford, viewed the issue as so important that he promised to close the church if landmark status were granted and to move the Latin Mass Community of Rockford, which has worshipped there for six years under the administration of the Institute of Christ the King, to another facility.

In early December, the commission voted to grant landmark status, and the petition passed to the Codes and Regulations Committee of the Rockford City Council, which was to consider it in early January.

I'm pleased to report, however, that, on Christmas Eve, Aiello and Anderson decided to withdraw their petition, recognizing that the best way to ensure the long-term survival of St. Mary's is to make sure that there is an active and vibrant congregation worshipping in the church. On December 29, they made their intentions known to the Rockford City Council, and, on January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany, the Codes and Regulations Committee agreed to allow Aiello and Anderson to withdraw their petition.

I would like to thank all of the *Chronicles* readers and visitors to our website, from across the country and around the world, who, through e-mails, phone calls, and letters, expressed their support for St. Mary's Oratory in the battle against Winnebago County. St. Mary's congregation is forever in your debt.

Political Philosophy and the God of Abraham

THOMAS L. PANGLE



"Stunningly erudite and discerning. Pangle makes splendid use of the great commentators and critics, listening to voices as diverse as the Rashi, Maimonides, Ibn Ezra, Calvin, Spinoza, and Kierkegaard, but Pangle's argument is very much his own. He is intellectually relentless, wrestling with titanic questions, arguing with elegance and clarity."

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A Sad Denouement

The greatness of man, writes Pascal in his *Pensees*, is great so long as man is conscious of his own insignificance. "A tree, by contrast, is not conscious of its own insignificance." In other words, man feels his insignificance; he is aware of it; and he is made great by his awareness of it. "But to consider one's insignificance, one must be able to think in the first place; for a ruined house feels nothing of the kind; and only man is capable of experiencing his own insignificance. *Ego vir videns*." To put it another way, the 17th-century savant goes on, the greatness of man lies solely in his capacity for thinking. "I can easily imagine a man without arms, or without feet; but never a man incapable of thought, for a such a man would differ but little from a stone."

Last month, I perplexed the faithful with some autobiographical musings, the point of which was to show how a man who derides experience in his misty youth is likely to feast himself upon it in his life's scorching summer. And the decisive moment, for me, came on the night I found myself at a roulette table in a seedy London casino.

I realized then, as I gazed into the spinning blackness before me, how little I knew myself. But hardly at all! I am not sure if anyone but a fellow gambler can fathom the horrible truth of what I am about to say, but it is much easier for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven than it is for a poor man playing roulette at \$5 a stake to put down \$100 straight up on a number. (It is not important to know just *how* poor he is, for everyone at the tables is or will one day become poor, so long as it is understood that my apothegm revolves around the notion of disproportionate risk.)

The paradox is that the contemplative life that I had led and clung to until then gave me much knowledge of the world but precious little understanding of myself. And I submit that it is at least as important for a thinker to know that, say, the 1956 Hungarian uprising was masterminded by Andropov as it is to know whether he, the so-called thinker in question, is or is not a yellow-bellied coward. And one of the ways of ascertaining whether one is a yellow-bellied coward is to see

if, while playing relatively small stakes, one can suddenly feel the winning number in one's innards and immediately risk everything in one's pockets on that miracle of intuition.

As a rule, one does nothing of the kind. One bobs and weaves, one dissembles. One prolongs the experience of risk, keeping the stakes low and thereby making a mockery of what that experience is all about. One feels the gnawing fear of losing all, of having to stop playing, of going home empty-handed. Of not being able to borrow more money. Of not being able to take a taxi. Of not having enough for the cup of coffee the following morning. Of not having enough change for the bus to get to the bank. Of inconvenience. Of embarrassment. Of ghosts, of thoughts, of friends. Of oneself.

Much later, I met a woman I fell in love with at first sight. If I had stayed with her from that day forward, if I had gambled everything blindly on the manifest chance of possessing her, if I had staked whatever it was that I vaingloriously thought I had achieved in my miserable life, I might have won big. She could have loved me back, and forever. What I did instead was madness in many people's considered opinion (for, without doubt, there are many people in this world even more cowardly than myself), but, in my own eyes, it was more of the same vacillation, calculation, rationalization . . . Unaccountably, I sought to qualify the experience of risk, thereby reducing it to an empty gesture, and what could have been a miracle in the life of a poet became an episode in the life of a gambler.

Is writing any different, I ask you? Does not even a serious writer—I am speaking here of a man of overwhelming purpose, not just some *New York Times* highbrow timeserver or a glorified airport-novel hack—choose the word he is about to put down on paper, like that wilful \$100 chip on the green-baize layout, with a thought to the audience, with a nod to the reader, with a wink to the editor? Is he not easily seduced by the phantom certainties, the clever simplifications, the convenient shortcuts that offer themselves and appear attractive or useful, along the way? Do the sparkling ornaments and the altogeth-

er delightful subterfuges of what is known as his "style" not lead him astray, to the continuing applause of those too dense to understand the substance of what he actually hopes to say? And can he, one life-wrecking day that comes but once in a man's rotten life, risk it all on a single spin of the wheel, and to hell with the ever-rising mortgage of the anaphora, the mousy hair of the schoolgirl simile, and the small change of the well-placed comma?

Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all—conscience in the broad sense of ratiocination, deliberation, assessment. It is said that, when the game of roulette was first introduced in its present form in the 18th century, the risk factor of 37, or 36 numbers plus zero, had been intended to represent the mature age of the average adult, beyond which a person simply could not conceive of a number with any natural facility. This is quite true. The risk expressed by probabilists as 1000:1, or even of 100:1, is even now utterly beyond us. We still live in a world measured in the number of teeth in our mouths, of letters in our alphabets, of houses on our streets, of days in our calendars, of diamonds in our bracelets. The billions spent on national healthcare, distances between cities or planets, and the speeds of sound and light are abstractions, which nobody in his right mind can be expected to gamble on and win.

Thirty-seven to one is another story. Yet which of us can say, with any degree of conviction, that, when eternal bliss is proffered to him at these odds—oh, any man playing \$5 a stake who wins \$3,500 on a single number knows the meaning of the word *bliss*, believe me—he would take the chance? That he would not hesitate, ever mindful of the ugly fact that hesitation is to risk what thinking about the stock market is to kissing? That he would throw all caution to the wind, in other words, and follow the miracle?

All right, forget the example of the good writer. Were not the multitudes who had chosen to follow our Lord commanded to do the same in His day? Yet how few among them did what was asked. What, 12 disciples? Think about it. 

Letter From the Tribunal

by Brian Kirkpatrick

Truth and Reconciliation



On the day my Brazilian student gave me the kind of reverent statements about Nelson Mandela that I would expect of such a fierce socialist, he also gave me an interesting history lesson. He reminded me of the coup that had led to 21 years of military rule in Brazil and said that, since the military had voluntarily relinquished power to the civilians, Brazil had not only had subsequent peaceful changes of administration, but one president had been forced to resign from office because of corruption. My student was proud of the way his country had handled the resignation, because the rule of law had prevailed. I thought he had good reason to be pleased, but, from my point of view, he dropped the ball when he added, with a disapproving tone, that the Brazilian military had been given an amnesty when they handed power over to civilians. He couldn't see that Brazil could move from military dictatorship to stable democracy because of the very amnesty he despises. When the military voluntarily handed over power, something had to be given to them in return.

Other countries have made a similar deal with their rulers in order to remove them from power, the people renouncing revenge in hopes of achieving a peaceful transition. Their experience sheds light on our own lives.

In the 1970's, the Argentine military took power because of the growing threat of a leftist underground. In the resulting "dirty war," the military seized suspects—sometimes in broad daylight, on busy city streets—whom they interrogated, tortured, and often killed. Many of the abducted never returned—the famous *desaparecidos*. Their mothers gathered in public squares to protest the kidnappings, making a powerful contribution to the military's loss of power. Even Argentina's generals couldn't bring themselves to torture grieving, gray-haired women.

The Argentine military eventually crushed the leftist underground, but, after suffering economic disaster and catastrophe in the Falklands war, they returned power to the civilians. A crucial part of the deal was the creation of a special tribunal. The military agreed to tell the country, through the tribunal, what they had done, and, in return, they received amnesty.

Chile made a similar choice. In 1973, elements of the Chilean military seized power, killing the legally elected Marxist President Allende Gossens in the process. In 1990, they made a deal to restore democratic government: Pinochet, the military chief, became a senator for life, but he and other military leaders received immunity from prosecution.

The Chilean physician who worked with my Brazilian friend and me speaks with great bitterness about the Chilean generals' amnesty. But in a country that had avoided military rule for more than a century before the anti-Allende coup, the restoration of democracy seemed worth the price to civilian leaders. When Pinochet was taken into custody and threatened with prosecution during a trip to London, my Chilean friend rejoiced at the prospects. He overlooked a likely consequence: Should the military ever seize power again, the betrayal of the deal with the generals—which is what Pinochet's legal troubles represented—means the military will have a powerful incentive to retain power forever.

In South Africa, the fall of apartheid led to the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The deposed were exempted from punishment if they agreed to tell the commission their secrets. Many of the most famous names of the old regime complied.

The politics of our country are dominated by another great overthrow. I have a picture of my brother as a little boy of four or five. In it, he is standing in front of a small building with signs over two entrances: White Only and Black. I remember seeing water fountains in the new shopping center near my house—this was in 1962 or 1963—labeled in the same way. Many other Americans can remember such things. We did not have Argentina's secrecy and mystery: What was done was out in the open; everyone knew about it.

A recent debate in the Maryland leg-

islature illustrates how we have responded to our great political change. As do many other states, Maryland reserves a percentage of state construction contracts for firms owned by women and minorities. Maryland's governor wanted to increase these set-asides to 25 percent. When people in the construction industry testified that qualified minorities could not be found, a black state senator delivered what he considered a devastating retort. In World War II, he said, he had belonged to a black unit that was trained to disable land mines. He proudly declared that he and his fellow soldiers had done a wonderful job. On the surface, the senator's anecdote is irrelevant, but its exegesis is simple: Whites injured me, my constituents, and our ancestors. So you owe us.

Are set-asides good government, in the sense of accomplishing a goal in the cheapest and most effective manner? When a state needs to raise a building or construct a highway, it asks companies to bid for the work, and it usually gives the contracts to the company with the lowest bid. This competition helps the state maximize the amount of work it can get for its money and creates an indirect pressure on contractors to maintain the quality of the work. Set-asides undermine this competition, with inevitable results: With time, the state gets less for its money. This will happen not because of any lack of virtue or skill on the part of blacks—the same problems existed when the *de facto* set-asides of segregation favored whites—but because of human nature.

Set-asides illustrate how we have handled our great racial upheaval: We have opted for compensation over reconciliation. Affirmative action is an obvious form of compensation, but there are others. The downgrading of standards in our schools is driven, in large part, by an attempt to compensate; widening "welfare" beyond all reason is another. The double standard about so-called hate speech is also a form of compensation: A black celebrity can vomit his or her hatred of whites with little censure or scandal, but whites must avoid such comments or pay a heavy price. Increasingly, we hear of financial compensation for the descendants of slaves for things done a century and a half ago.

This strategy benefits our politicians,

but it has contributed enormously to the illegitimacy, crime, and drug abuse that are the true oppressors of black Americans. It also benefits the civil-rights establishment, which has followed the compensation strategy to its logical end: the extortion of large corporations.

Reconciliation is not served under such a system, and truth has suffered as well. The canard that white America is filled with hatred of blacks has become the left's bloody shirt. The compensation system encourages the spreading of this myth.

Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and South Africa have varied in their subsequent happiness or misery. However, many of their people understood that truth and reconciliation are often the best that can be gotten, as sometimes justice comes at an exorbitant price. To balance accounts, to right all past wrongs, costs too much for mere human beings to bear.

Brian Kirkpatrick writes from Baltimore, Maryland.

Letter to the Bishop

by Joe Ecclesia

Liturgical Flora



Your Excellency:

Two months ago, the priest in our parish removed six candles from the back altar of our church—the one that's still against the wall—and replaced them with potted plants on either side of the tabernacle. When asked why he had replaced the candles with plants, our priest replied that the candles were liturgically incorrect.

Soon, the number of plants began spreading across the front of the church. The plants appeared mysteriously, as in that old science-fiction movie where alien pods intent on taking over the earth keep reproducing. Potted plants turned the prayer space before Our Blessed Mother into a miniature garden; several taller artificial plants clumped themselves around the pulpit; at one point during Eastertide, a fountain was added to this garden, popping on unexpectedly during Mass so that some parishioners initially feared that a pipe in the sacristy had broken.

You will note, your Excellency, that I am not a fan of indoor flora. Real plants belong outside; they shed leaves, emit pollen, attract insects, and often require more care than a dog, without the corresponding return in affection. As for artificial plants, they are best left to the lobbies of banks, motels, and government buildings. (By the way, I have noticed that the priests who complain about the tackiness of certain religious statuary are often the very ones who adorn the church with artificial plants. The priest who introduced the shrubbery to our church is the same priest who objected to statues in our church library: "I don't want the library to become a shrine," he said. What a delightful idea, I thought, and I plan to mention the idea of a shrine with books to his successor.)

I wasn't certain what to do. At first, I considered playing commando, slipping into the church, and giving the plants the old heave-ho. Then I remembered that scene in the World War II play *Mister Roberts*, in which Mr. Roberts throws the captain's potted palms off the ship on which they are both stationed. When he learns about the missing palms, the captain doubles the number of plants. Fearing that a similar course of action on my part might cause the plants in our church to be restored arithmetically (or is that geometrically?), I decided to abide by our priest's decision.

Recently, however, I happened to witness, by way of television and a video machine (we live in a marvelous age, praise God), the Holy Father celebrating Mass in Rome. Can you imagine my gape-mouthed astonishment when I suddenly espied candles rather than artificial bushes on the altar? I crept closer to the television set—there were no prayers being offered at the moment, so I hope you won't think me irreverent creeping about the carpet that way—to be certain that those candlesticks were not some sort of stiff, leafless plants such as ornamental cacti. But no: There they were, big as life—candlesticks!

It shocked me to no end, Your Excellency, to realize that our Roman amigos hadn't yet replaced their altar candles with altar plants. This negligence in liturgical ornamentation initially struck me as quite irresponsible on the part of the Vatican. If officials in the papal government can find the time to take the fig leaves off the figures on the Sistine Chapel, I thought, then surely they can find the time to put a few fig leaves on the al-

tar. However, the thought then occurred to me that the cause of this oversight might well stem from ignorance rather than deliberate negligence. Is Rome possibly unaware of this change in decor? Our brothers and sisters in the Vatican are, after all, quite busy, what with the swarms of tourists, doddering dissident nuns, marching homosexuals, youth rallies, and the like. What can the beleaguered servants of the Holy See know of the liturgical trends which we in the American Church are setting?

It was then that I thought of you, Your Excellency. You see, if I write to the Vatican to inform the Holy Father that he needs to hie himself off to an Italian Kmart for some silk plants and potted geraniums, with the explanation that his altar candles are liturgically incorrect, why, he might not believe me. At best, he might deem me impertinent. After all, I am but a simple layman in the eyes of the Vatican, a yahoo, an anti-candlean meddler. But you are a bishop, a prince of the Church—indeed, of the American Church; a letter from you would surely do the trick in setting our pontiff right.

Along with your letter, if I may be so bold, I would suggest that you include a Burpee seed catalog and some seed samples. (You might wish to check first to see whether customs officials allow for the posting of seeds.) A gardener's manual for indoor plants might also help break the ice and would set a positive tone regarding this decorative change. You might consider enlisting homemaker and writer Martha Stewart as an *amica curiae*; she has a keen eye for this sort of interior design and seems to enjoy giving advice.

Better yet, it might be even more politic to ring up FTD and have some actual flora delivered to St. Peter's. Let me suggest several dozen large ferns and some of those big vases of assorted flowers which florists like to call "spring bouquets." Some miniature gardening tools and a nice sprinkling can or two would undoubtedly please the custodial staff. Since Saint Peter's is not exactly ablaze with sunlight, might I also recommend that we offer to install some grow lamps? We might even consider a diocesan fund drive—Peter's Potted Palms rather than Peter's Pence?—to raise money for plants. I would gladly kick in a few dollars.

Many thanks for your kind ear. I hope that you will find my idea useful. Keeping you in my prayers,

Joe Ecclesia

The Battle for Bush's Ear and Soul

It is reasonable to assume that a country's foreign policy is conducted in the interest of that country's security and well-being and that those entrusted with its formulation and conduct will act in a coherent and rational manner. At the end of 2003, the foreign policy of the United States was neither coherent nor rational. There was no unity of purpose or of action. This is illustrated by a sequence of strange events in the space of one week last December.

On December 6, the Associated Press reported that "President Bush and his top aides were cajoling, imploring and even sweet-talking allies" into sharing the burden of reconstructing Iraq with America. In a reversal of previous policy, Washington declared that it wanted greater roles in Iraq for the United Nations and NATO. Secretary of State Colin Powell and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld were sent to Europe with a new, less confrontational message, initially delivered by President Bush in London just before Thanksgiving, that both the reconstruction of Iraq and the War on Terror demand allies and partnerships.

Mr. Rumsfeld was anything but his usual abrasive self when he met NATO defense ministers in Brussels (December 2) and declared that Washington "welcomes more help in Iraq." When he went on to declare that "maybe we ought to try to do a better job of communicating," his audience could hardly believe this was the same man who had been so dismissive of "Old Europe" a year ago.

Only days later, addressing his NATO colleagues in Brussels, Mr. Powell urged the alliance "to examine how it might do more to support peace and stability in Iraq, which every leader has acknowledged is critical to us." NATO foreign ministers did not exactly embrace the idea, but they left the door open for such a possibility, if a suitable political framework could be agreed upon.

As the *New York Times* commented in the aftermath of the Rumsfeld/Powell tour, "there is a universal recognition among NATO members that the rift both within the Atlantic alliance and between Europe and the US has to be repaired if the alliance is to remain viable." The new mood went so far that President

Jacques Chirac, the most outspoken European opponent of the war in Iraq, started talking of a more active French role in NATO and even in Iraq. His officials hinted that France had not discarded a contingency plan to send 8,000 to 10,000 soldiers to Iraq if the political structure was right.

Then came the bombshell. On December 9, Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz released a memorandum (dated December 5) announcing that countries that had opposed the Iraq war would be barred by the United States from bidding on billions of dollars of reconstruction contracts, ranging from equipping the new Iraqi army to rebuilding power and water plants, roads, oil installations, and communications systems. Those contracts would only be given to companies from the United States and her coalition partners, Wolfowitz said. In a sentence laden with cynicism yet masterfully Marxist in its dialectics, he declared that "limiting competition for prime contracts will encourage the expansion of international cooperation in Iraq and in future efforts" and that "every effort must be made to expand international cooperation in Iraq."

Wolfowitz's statement was the diplomatic equivalent of a barrel of gasoline being thrown onto an almost extinguished fire. "We noted this news with amazement," German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said. Canada's incoming Prime Minister Paul Martin found it "very difficult to understand" why such a statement would be made. "This is a gratuitous and extremely unhelpful decision," declared Chris Patten, the E.U. commissioner for international relations.

The announcement came on the eve of a major U.S. initiative led by former secretary of state James A. Baker III to reduce Iraq's foreign debt of over \$120 billion, much of it owed to France, Germany, and Russia. Mr. Baker's European tour nevertheless went ahead as scheduled, and the Europeans proved surprisingly accommodating to his request that they lessen Iraq's debt burdens. France's and Germany's cooperative posture was an explicit nod to the Baker camp within the Republican Party, a pointed ges-



ture of support to the old GOP establishment. As a British commentator noted, "[T]hey were helping Baker in spite of Wolfowitz; they were investing into the next Administration's internal balance of forces, which is more important than some elusive Iraqi contracts."

The timing of Wolfowitz's December 9 announcement was embarrassing for President Bush personally, since he had scheduled telephone conversations with Chirac, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, and Russian President Vladimir Putin for the following day to discuss debt cancellation. Instead of pressing his interlocutors for concessions, he was subjected to their cold questioning about the Pentagon announcement. It seems inconceivable that Wolfowitz was unaware of the arrangement at the time of his announcement.

In the aftermath of the apparent *faux pas*, most foreign commentators accused Mr. Bush of insensitivity and arrogance, while most domestic commentators complained of his ineptitude. The *New York Times* set the tone by declaring that "President Bush has reversed field again and left the European allies angry, the secretary of state looking out of step, and the rest of us wondering exactly what his policy really is."

It is remarkable that Wolfowitz himself was not included among those deserving reproach. The implied assumption is that the assistant secretary of defense was simply acting as a loyal official carrying out his assigned tasks and that the President was to blame for an impression of illogicality and incoherence in his team's policy. Unnamed White House sources revealed that the President was "distinctly unhappy" about the whole affair, but—whatever his true feelings—Mr. Bush defended Wolfowitz's announcement. Colin Powell remained silent, however;

a top State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity, reflected his boss's feelings when he called the whole episode "a train wreck."

Why did Paul Wolfowitz—an experienced, skillful, and highly intelligent operator—choose such an unhappy moment to make the announcement, and why did he adopt such a gratuitously insulting tone? At the technical level, why was a memo written on December 5 released exactly four, and not ten or twelve, days later, which would have given Bush and Baker an opportunity to launch the campaign for debt reduction without immediate hindrance? At the policy level, why was Wolfowitz allowed to impose the exclusion order in the first place—it is clear that the December 9 memo was his and that Bush approved it against the better judgment of Powell and others—when it was so diametrically opposed to the thrust of the administration's policy in previous weeks?

Wolfowitz is guilty neither of ineptitude nor of incoherence. Over the past three years, his every statement and move has proved that he is highly rational and coherent in pursuit of his objectives. The problem is that those objectives are not the stated goals of the Bush administration as a whole.

Far from seeking cooperation and partnership, Wolfowitz and other neoconservatives want to create a permanent rift between the United States and Europe. His famous *Vanity Fair* admission last spring—that in seeking justification for war against Iraq "for bureaucratic reasons we settled on one issue, weapons of mass destruction, because it was the one reason everyone could agree on"—likewise caused furor in Europe. It made a mockery of Powell's claim that Iraq was being attacked because she had violated her "international obligations" under the 1991 surrender agreement, which required the disclosure and removal of Iraq's WMD's. Just like his December 9 announcement, Wolfowitz's *Vanity Fair* admission was *prima facie* irrational and at odds with the Bush administration's stated policy objectives. In both cases, a wrench was thrown into the work of "rebuilding Iraq" through international consensus and cooperation.

Wolfowitz's behavior is coherent and logical only if his true objective is to make sure that the United States remains the only outside power that matters in the Middle East. Since he is neither mad nor stupid, his December 9 announce-

ment should be seen as a deliberate move to preempt and torpedo Bush's, Baker's, and Powell's initiative to get Europe, NATO, and the United Nations involved in Iraq. Wolfowitz and his neoconservative allies do not want any foreign involvement there, except on *their* terms and under *their* control. They want the United States to remain engaged on her own, with all key decisions made by themselves, not through some multilateral mechanism that would be imposed if NATO were to send troops and Europe were to forgive debts. Wolfowitz's claim that "every effort must be made to expand international cooperation" is the exact opposite of his true intent, revealed in his hint that "future efforts" like the one in Iraq are planned.

If Bush proves insufficiently enthusiastic toward such efforts, some neoconservatives are hinting that they may ditch him and look for another political host organism. On December 9, the *Washington Post* published an odd article called "How Dean Could Win," by William Kristol, the editor of the *Weekly Standard*, which listed potential weaknesses Bush will face during the 2004 campaign. *Are not Bush's response to September 11 and his overall leadership in the War on Terror compelling reasons to keep him in office?* Kristol asks. He proceeds to give an ambiguous answer: While Bush is committed to victory in that war, Colin Powell is committed to diplomatic compromise, and Donald Rumsfeld, "to an odd kind of muscle-flexing-disengagement":

And when Bush's chief of staff, Andrew H. Card Jr., said . . . with regard to Iraq, "We're going to get out of there as quickly as we can, but not before we finish the mission at hand," one wonders: . . . doesn't the first half of that sentence suggest that even the most senior of Bush's subordinates haven't really internalized the president's view of the fundamental character of this war? If they haven't, will the American people grasp the need for Bush's continued leadership on November 2? If not, prepare for President Dean.

There is only one way to read this bizarre paragraph: The administration had better lay off Israel, stay deep in Iraq, and authorize new "future efforts" (Syria? Iran?), or Kristol's friends will back Dean.

That scenario is far from unthinkable: If the Democrats inherit Iraq, they may prove wonderfully appreciative of what Kristol calls the "fundamental character" of the war. Ever since Woodrow Wilson, the notion of spreading democracy, building nations, and bringing human rights to the benighted foreign masses has been the Democrats' specialty. The preoccupation with making the Middle East safe for Our Unsinkable Aircraft Carrier has, historically, resonated more deeply with Dean's party than with the GOP.

Kristol's neoconservative friends have used Bush with skill over the past three years, but they still do not trust him. They know that, before running for the presidency, he had no strong views about any foreign topic, the Middle East included, and they only trust people with strong views—their views. Apparently, even Rumsfeld no longer pleases them, and targeting him, Powell, and Card may hint at the scope of their personnel ambitions for a second Bush term.

Wolfowitz's premeditated blunder of December 9 should be seen in this context. It had the additional objective of severing Bush's remaining ties to those of his father's friends and advisors who still hope to pull him away from the neocons. In the final analysis, the neoconservatives may be more interested in discrediting Baker, Powell, and others than in running Iraq. The Big Prize for them would be to isolate Bush from competing counsel so that they can completely control policy in the next administration.

Is George W. Bush aware of all of this, and is he willing—and able—to do something about it? The answer will become clear if Wolfowitz remains Rumsfeld's No. 2. In a normal, well-ordered country, his actions last December—whether caused by malice, ineptitude, or stupidity—would be punished by immediate dismissal. If he remains at his post, I fear that America is no longer a normal country.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

A Military Encore in North Korea

by Doug Bandow

As if the Bush administration were not busy enough already, Undersecretary of State John Bolton has said that North Korea should “draw the appropriate lesson from Iraq.” That followed a comment from President George W. Bush that, if Washington’s efforts “don’t work diplomatically, they’ll have to work militarily.”

Hopes for the former have risen and fallen, as talks have alternated with threats. New negotiations are planned, but there is no guarantee that they will yield a more positive result. Indeed, North Korea might only be stalling for time; in any case, she is not close to agreeing to dismantle her nuclear-weapons program and accept outside inspections.

Before Washington again brandishes the stick of war, it must recognize that North Korea is not Iraq. A military strike almost certainly means full-scale war on the Korean peninsula, with massive casualties and widespread devastation.

North Korea is thought to possess one or two nuclear weapons—or at least has reprocessed enough plutonium to make them. After being confronted by the United States last October for cheating on the 1994 Agreed Framework, she has taken a series of provocative steps, including reopening her mothballed nuclear plant in Yongbyon and preparing to reprocess—if she has not already done so—8,000 spent fuel rods to produce plutonium.

North Korea probably chose the current path for several reasons. Nuclear capability is the only reason nations pay any attention to an otherwise bankrupt, irrelevant state. So far, the nuclear option also has been useful in eliciting bribes.

Moreover, developing a nuclear arsenal may be the surest route to ensuring that the United States does not attack in the future. After Serbia and now Iraq, any country might find herself in Uncle Sam’s sites: Having an atomic arsenal

will likely cause Washington to avert its gaze.

A decade ago, many American policymakers and pundits blithely talked about military options for destroying the nuclear reactor in Yongbyon and other nuclear facilities. Today, many people—including, it would seem, President Bush—are making the same calculations.

For instance, former Gen. John Singlaub and Adm. Thomas Moorer are pushing a military option. Dennis Ross of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy is slightly more reticent: “The purpose is not to make the military option inevitable but to build the pressure to produce a diplomatic alternative.” Columnist Charles Krauthammer believes that the United States had no choice but to wait until Iraq is finished: “We simply cannot handle two military crises at once.” After Iraq, “temporary appeasement” should end.

This may be the private position of President Bush, who previously indicated that “all options are on the table,” including military action. The Pentagon has released unsubtle statements that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is “immersed” in the issue. Rumsfeld has also called North Korea a “terrorist regime,” which is perhaps the most obvious justification for attack.

Indeed, it is hard to find anyone who speaks with administration officials off the record who believes war with North Korea is not a real possibility. An unnamed military official told the *New York Times* that military options were being discussed: “We’ve been talking about a lot of very ugly scenarios that could play out in the next few weeks.” And the *Far Eastern Economic Review* reports that “A prominent Asian academic tells the Review that not one of the senior administration officials he met with recently would rule out military action to remove North Korea’s nuclear threat.”

Seymour Hersh, writing in the *New Yorker*, quotes an intelligence official:

Bush and Cheney want [Kim Jong Il’s] head on a platter. Don’t be distracted by all this talk about negotiations. There will be negotiations, but they have a plan, and they are going to get this guy after Iraq. He’s their version of Hitler.

It is not surprising that policymakers in Seoul, within easy reach of North Korean artillery and Scud missiles, have a different perspective. Officials in Beijing, Moscow, and Tokyo also worry about radioactive fallout, missile attacks, refugee flows, economic turmoil, and regional chaos. There is no one anywhere in the region—even among the countries most vulnerable to a North Korea with nuclear weapons—that is in favor of war.

South Korea is particularly adamant. As then-President-elect Roh Moo-hyun explained, “It is impossible not to have differences [with the United States], and I cannot agree to attacking North Korea.” During a campaign debate, candidate Roh declared: “For Washington, their prime interest lies in getting rid of weapons of mass destruction to restore the world order, but for us it’s a matter of survival.”

Former State Department official Jed Babbin argues:

If the nuclear weapons program continues, we should consider an Osirak-like strike at the Yongbyon plant which is the center of North Korea’s program. It’s quite possible to do that without beginning a general war.

Ralph Cossa, head of the Pacific Forum CSIS, contends that, since the survival of his regime is Kim Jong Il’s highest goal, Kim would not risk destruction by retaliating.

Others propose coupling a military strike with the use or threat of tactical nuclear weapons against North Korean conventional forces. To attack and assume North Korea would not respond, however, would be a wild gamble. First, a military strike might not destroy all of Pyongyang’s nuclear assets; hitting the reprocessing facility and spent fuel rods could create radioactive fallout over China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea.

Second, if the Kim Jong Il regime did not respond, its prestige would be gone. Given the official U.S. policy of preemption, the designation of North Korea as a member of the “Axis of Evil,” and the recent offensive against Iraq for aspiring to build a nuclear weapon, Pyongyang might decide that even a limited military strike is the opening phase of a war

for regime change. In that case, it would make sense to roll the tanks in order to begin hostilities at the time of its choosing. This is certainly how Pyongyang is threatening to respond to any U.S. strike.

Bill Taylor, formerly of West Point and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, who met with Kim Il-Sung and other senior North Korea leaders a decade ago, believes that “faced with a major military strike on its territory, the North Korean leadership will respond with everything it has against Americans and our allies who fall within range of their weapons.” South Korean Defense Minister Lee Jun said simply: “[I]f America attacks North Korea, war on the Korean peninsula will be unavoidable.”

An account by a high-ranking defector, Cho Myung-chul, is particularly sobering. In analyzing Iraq’s defeat in the first Gulf War, North Korean military officials concluded that Baghdad was too defensive: “If we’re in a war, we’ll use everything. And if there’s a war, we should attack first, to take the initiative.” He estimates at 80 percent the chances of general war in response to even a limited strike on Yongbyon. “Everything” is a daunting force: In addition to a large army, North Korea possesses long-range artillery and rocket launchers, deploys up to 600 Scud missiles and additional longer-range No Dong missiles, and has developed a significant number and range of chemical and, perhaps, biological weapons. Likely casualties are estimated at one million.

A limited retaliatory strike against America’s Yongsan base in the center of Seoul, accompanied by heavy civilian casualties, is also possible. The Seoul-Inchon metropolis hosts roughly half of South Korea’s population (some 24 million people), is the nation’s industrial heartland, and is being developed into a regional hub for East Asia. Pyongyang is thought to be able to fire 300,000 to 500,000 shells per hour into Seoul.

Washington could hardly afford not to respond to an attack on Yongsan, yet retaliation would likely lead to an escalation that would be difficult to halt, short of general war. Indeed, after striking, North Korea might announce that she is finished, that she unfortunately had to retaliate against the United States but she plans no additional attacks. However, if the United States struck anew, North Korea would respond again.

Such a scenario might threaten civilian control of the military in Seoul; it would almost certainly set the Korean

and American governments at odds. The perception that South Koreans died because the United States acted against the wishes of the Roh administration would create a divisive, and perhaps decisive, split between Seoul and Washington.

Publicly, at least, President Roh calls claims of a possible American attack “inaccurate and groundless.” Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun asks: “How can [Washington] ignore or go against South Korea in its North Korea policy?” Easily, actually, as the Clinton administration proved in planning for war in 1994.

Dealing with North Korea will prove to be one of the most vexing challenges for this and future administrations. No one should believe that military action offers a simple and safe solution. Any attempt at military preemption in North Korea almost certainly means a real war of horrific destruction.

Doug Bandow is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and the author of Tripwire: Korea and U.S. Foreign Policy in a Changed World. He is a former special assistant to President Ronald Reagan.

IMMIGRATION

The Cost of Immigration

by James R. Edwards

Beginning in 1991, for more than a year, a 22-year-old Salvadoran immigrant sexually abused an eight-year-old California girl. This permanent legal resident took advantage of her whenever he was at his cousin’s house, where he lived in Los Angeles.

He was not always there, so the child would return to the home of her girlfriend to play. Whenever he was there, however, he would grope her. He even attempted intercourse.

The immigrant molester was arrested on March 23, 1992. He pled no contest to a sexual-abuse charge, was convicted, underwent psychological examination, and served only a few months of a six-year sentence with four years probation. After his release in mid-September 1992, he obtained permission from his probation officer to go to Oregon for three months—unsupervised.

His conviction for child molestation, an aggravated felony, made the immigrant deportable. But the Immigration and Naturalization Service nearly put this criminal back on America’s streets permanently. (The INS didn’t even know that the alien had been arrested!)

But this predator faced a real guardian—a parent. The girl’s mother informed the INS that the immigrant had been released from jail. The INS’s response: *So what?*

A convicted alien child molester roamed American streets from September 1992 until September 1994 under what the victim’s mother calls a “total honor system.” The state of California listed the immigrant as a sex offender.

Was this alien criminal a menace to society? The judge considered him a flight risk and set bail at \$90,000. Although the specific times and dates of the abuse that had occurred over the course of a year were hard for a young child to establish, it is clear that he repeatedly assaulted her. And the victim says, “I know he did it [to others] before me and he’ll do it again to somebody else.”

The mother persisted. From December 1993 until September 1994, she had to gather proof for an INS investigator that the immigrant had been convicted of this heinous crime. She had to obtain original, certified court documents—at her own expense—to give to the INS.

After nine months, the INS finally stepped up and deported the immigrant child molester.

A “border culture” now overtaking the country has resulted in many officials’ lackadaisical attitudes. U.S. citizens, who pay the taxes that fund immigration services and law enforcement, bear the ugly consequences of this border culture—in this case, as victims of crime. These crimes need not have happened. They occur because the fire-hydrant volume of immigration is flooding the country with hundreds of thousands of aliens for whom crime pays.

For every two legal immigrants, one immigrant enters the United States illegally. Some aliens are “coyotes” in alien-smuggling rings. Others smuggle narcotics. Some launder money. Still others traffic in fraudulent identity documents and steal people’s identities. Both legal and illegal aliens commit these and other serious crimes.

Under the prevailing border culture, immigrants can make out like bandits by victimizing the innocent. They may not

be caught, because they can easily slink into the barrio and ethnic enclave. If they are caught, immigration authorities are not likely to pursue their deportation, as the case of the Salvadoran sexual predator shows.

An INS investigator told the California victim's mother that only one fourth of deportable criminal aliens are actually removed from the United States. This fact has drawn the ire of the House Appropriations Committee. Its report on fiscal year 2001 INS appropriations stated,

Most disturbing was the revelation made earlier this year that the INS released 35,319 criminal aliens back into the community, aliens who should have been deported, of whom 11,605 (37%) were later arrested for additional crimes, including 3,847 for drug-related crimes, 98 for homicide, 142 for sexual assault, 44 for kidnapping, 347 for robbery, and 1,214 for assault.

If not for the determination of one American woman, another criminal alien would have joined the three fourths of criminal aliens who get off the deportation hook and land back in our communities—often to commit more crimes.

Besides importing criminals to our streets, uncontrolled immigration is causing what the Hudson Institute's Irwin Stelzer has called "a rising noncitizen jail population." The Bureau of Prisons says that nearly 30 percent of federal inmates are foreigners. Figures on state and local jails are harder to come by. The INS, now named Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) under the Department of Homeland Security, estimates that about 84,000 state inmates are foreign-born. Three fourths or more occupy cells in Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas.

Lamar Smith, then chairman of the House Immigration Subcommittee, declared at a 1997 hearing,

There are over 110,000 foreign-born nationals in federal and state prisons. The intake of new foreign-born prisoners has been rising in recent years, with approximately 50,000 more entering our prisons in fiscal year 1996. Historically, almost 80 percent of foreign-born prisoners turn out to be removable

criminal aliens; thus, in addition to those who are already incarcerated, about 40,000 more removable criminal aliens enter American prisons each year.

What is the ICE's excuse for not making sure that criminal aliens get a one-way trip home? Lack of personnel, which is the same excuse the ICE gives for not picking up the illegal aliens whom America's local police capture by the vanload.

On the night of July 17, 2002, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, a sheriff's deputy stopped a van missing a taillight on I-244. Eighteen illegal aliens were packed in the van. He called the INS, who initially told him to hold the aliens. Two hours later, the INS said, *Let them go*.

One of the captured aliens had a Texas driver's license; another had a Maryland driver's license. The aliens said they were driving from Houston to New York or Chicago.

On the Friday before Memorial Day 2002, just as the Office of Homeland Security issued an alert about possible terrorism, police stopped a battered van with seven illegal aliens from the Middle East at the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. The aliens displayed a variety of ID's, four of which seemed legitimate. One was a fake government card that came from Times Square. Another was a phony passport.

Police called the INS at 5:20 P.M.; the INS returned the call at 8:00 P.M. The aliens had to be released because the INS could not come to get them.

Congress has added thousands of new ICE and Border Patrol agents over the past half-decade. Repeated budget requests for more investigators have been axed by INS bosses or the Office of Management and Budget. With immigration at extremely high levels today, however, there is no way the ICE could ever hire enough personnel to do its job satisfactorily.

The proof is in its reputation. Attorney General John Ashcroft asked the International Association of Chiefs of Police for help in catching aliens who do not register their place of U.S. residence (a law long on the books but unenforced for more than a decade). The Billings, Montana, police chief, who formerly headed the Nebraska State Police, told of his experience with the INS: "We'd call them up and they'd say let them go, we're too busy."

The INS has received some of the most generous budget increases of any agency

in the past several years. Its budget rose 18 percent in fiscal year 2002 and 40 percent from fiscal year 1996 to 1998.

The Clinton administration misallocated INS resources. It discouraged interior enforcement and stacked agents on the border. The Clinton policy became, in effect, *We'll make it a little harder to cross the border, but, once you are in America, we won't touch you*.

In 1994, the INS split the policy and operations arms of its investigations division, making it harder to implement enforcement policy. It downplayed interior enforcement, putting no senior-level executive in charge of investigations from 1996 until 2001.

As a former assistant commissioner for investigations, John F. Shaw testified before Congress in 1999, "in-house at INS, the Commissioner [Doris Meissner] has said that Interior Enforcement is a term of usage invented by Investigations and devoid of meaning." Prosecutorial discretion is one thing; a pattern of ignoring "minor" violations is another.

Bureaucratic buck-passing has even led the INS to break the law. Immigration law requires the agency to detain aggravated-felon aliens until they are removed. Yet it routinely releases removable criminal aliens and lets illegal aliens walk.

The Border Patrol arrested John Lee Malvo—an illegal alien from Jamaica recently convicted of capital murder as one of the suspected Washington, D.C., snipers—in Bellingham, Washington, on December 19, 2001, along with his mother. Since they were stowaways, the law calls for their mandatory detention and immediate removal, which the Border Patrol recommended. The INS, however, released Uma Sceon James on a \$1,500 bond and Malvo on his own recognition.

Despite the agency's complaints, the basic problem is not money, understaffing, or ineptitude. At bottom, the INS suffers from being overwhelmed by a large volume of aliens. And its leadership lacks commitment to law and order.

Census figures show that the United States became home to more than 1.3 million legal and illegal immigrants each year throughout the 1990's. In addition to the roughly one million legal immigrants annually admitted during that decade, the United States granted temporary visas to another 30 million aliens annually. A portion of them became illegal aliens. Millions more do not require a visa because they come from a visa-waiv-

er country. Nearly half a billion people cross the border every year (some repeatedly, as commuters). Then, of course, there are the illegal border jumpers.

"The reason the INS can't respond is they are literally drowning in illegals," says Eugene Davis, a 29-year veteran of the Border Patrol. He calls the problem "worse than epidemic."

As a practical matter, this tumult far outpaces any number of agents the ICE, Border Patrol, or any other federal agency could hope to hire. The only reasonable option is to lower the number of immigrants, starting with those countries that send the most or have the highest proportions of illegal aliens and criminal immigrants and the lowest rates of naturalization (a measure of assimilation).

Other criteria for imposing stricter standards could include whether a country of origin readily takes back its emigrant criminals, sponsors terrorism, or allows dual citizenship.

The top sets the tone, and, sadly, the top INS guy has been disturbingly soft on enforcing the law. President Bush's INS commissioner, James Ziglar, a self-identified libertarian, told the *Arizona Daily Star* in 2002 that

We need to set up a regime where we don't have to spend so much of our time and effort in enforcement activities dealing with people who are not terrorists, who are not threats to our national security, who are economic refugees.

Ziglar was obliging the whims of the Mexican government, pushing for a mass amnesty of immigration lawbreakers. Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge expressed a similar view in Miami on December 9, 2003. If the head of the INS is on record as unwilling to enforce immigration laws, however, then who is supposed to do it? If he does not realize that an alien does not have to be a terrorist to threaten the nation's security and safety, who in the government does? If he does not know that there is no such thing as an economic refugee, what is the average American to do?

One obvious solution to the ICE personnel problem is to involve America's cops on the beat. The Department of Justice has begun to reexamine a legal opinion drafted during the Clinton administration. The 1996 opinion interprets the law narrowly with regard to the authority of local and state police officers to en-

force immigration law: "State and local police may constitutionally detain or arrest aliens who have violated the criminal provisions of" U.S. immigration laws, but not "solely for purposes of civil deportation proceedings." The current Department of Justice is reconsidering the matter, and media reports in spring 2002 quoted a leaked draft as saying that states and localities have the "inherent authority to enforce civil as well as criminal violations of federal immigration law" in their capacity as "sovereign entities."

Capitol Hill conservatives have no excuse for failing to take advantage of the help of the people who daily enforce the laws. There are nearly 700,000 state and local police officers, compared with just 50,000 federal law officers (including 6,000 ICE special agents). Local cops would improve the odds of capturing and removing more of the estimated nine million illegal aliens.

Proponents of this approach point out that the use of local police is about more than homeland security and antiterrorism. It reestablishes general respect for law, enhancing vigilance at the local level and increasing the certainty that lawbreakers—including immigration violators—will be caught and suffer real consequences for choosing to break the law.

After all, it was run-of-the-mill illegal aliens who aided some of the September 11 hijackers, helping them fraudulently obtain driver's licenses and other ID's.

In the end, security advocates say, mass immigration with loose controls has serious consequences—including more scarred lives; greater exposure of the innocent public to risk; and extra taxpayer costs for catching, trying, jailing, detaining, processing, and removing bad foreigners.

James R. Edwards, Jr., co-author of The Congressional Politics of Immigration Reform, is an adjunct fellow with the Hudson Institute.

HEALTHCARE

Night Moves

by Stephen Moore

If the recent passage of the \$395-billion Medicare prescription-drug bill teaches us anything, it is that just elect-

ing more Republicans to the House and Senate accomplishes very little. We have a Republican House, a Republican Senate, and a Republican President. Yet over 200 House Republicans voted for the biggest expansion of the Great Society welfare state in nearly four decades. Only 25 voted against it. In the Senate, only 9 out of 51 Republicans voted "no." On December 8, President Bush signed the bill and is now trumpeting it as a great accomplishment. We have plenty of Republicans in Washington, but few who actually believe in smaller government.

In the end, the bill passed with just two votes to spare in the House in a roll call that started at 3:00 A.M. on Saturday, November 22, and ended just before 6:00 A.M. This was the longest time ever taken for a House vote.

During the days before the vote, Club for Growth Advocacy alerted every House Republican that we opposed the bill because of its enormous cost and because it is a giant leap toward Hillary-style healthcare. We released a poll showing that most seniors are satisfied with their existing prescription-drug insurance coverage and that they oppose the bill when they learn of the details. We called all of the Club members in the House to remind them of our opposition and to urge them to hold firm.

Two lieutenants quickly emerged to lead the conservative revolt: Pat Toomey and Mike Pence. Both had been elected with Club support. Mike was all over the news eloquently dismantling this bill, arguing that he could never in good conscience look his children in the eyes and tell them that he had voted for a one-trillion-dollar entitlement program that they would have to pay for some day. Sitting in the Oval Office, he told President Bush: "With all due respect, Mr. President, I didn't come to this town to create new entitlements, but to rein in the ones we already have."

The day of the vote, it became clear to Toomey and Pence that there were 30 Republicans who were either solid "no" votes or leaning that way. One member who was a hard "no" from the very beginning was Tom Feeney of Florida. Tom is the freshman-class representative to the House leadership, a position that goes to the newcomer whom the Speaker of the House wants to groom for a leadership position. Feeney was told that his dissent would set him back three years in his attempt to climb the House ladder. He would be relegated to the back

bench. The leadership put their arms around him and shook their heads and told him how disappointed they were in him. "Why jeopardize your career, Tom, over this one little vote?" Feeney never wavered. He, too, told the President that he could not in good conscience vote for an expansion of the welfare state. He told House leaders that "this is not about my career, this is about my country." Of all the "no" votes, Tom probably had the most to lose.

The night of the vote, Pat Toomey hosted a dinner at the Hunan Restaurant on Capitol Hill for 20 of the Republicans who were against the bill, to encourage them to "stick together." Toomey and Pence had devised a plan to vote down the Medicare bill, then come back to the President with a scaled-back plan that would cover only those seniors who do not have existing prescription-drug insurance and would retain the one redeeming feature of the bill, health savings accounts. This was exactly what the Club and the *Wall Street Journal* had urged as a sensible alternative, costing only one third of what the conference-report cost. The plan was for these conservatives to go to the floor and to record their "no" votes immediately, which would signal to the Democrats that there were not enough Republican votes to pass the bill. It almost worked.

In the first ten minutes of the vote, there were 17 Republican "no" votes recorded. The Democrats, who did not want to hand Bush a "victory" on this issue, voted "no" *en masse*, with the exception of about a dozen who waited on the sidelines to see what would happen on the Republican side of the aisle. When the normal 15 minutes had passed, the bill was losing by 15 votes. After an hour, it appeared that the House had rejected the bill, as 218 representatives, a majority, had voted against it.

That is when the intense lobbying began. Congressmen were promised pork-barrel projects and threatened with primary challengers in the upcoming election. The President, who had just returned from England, called legislators at 5:00 A.M. to round up a few more votes.

The previous day, Todd Akin of Missouri had received a call from a state legislator, no doubt at the urging of the White House, threatening to run a primary challenge against him if he voted "no." I talked to Todd several times, urging him not to buckle. Akin withstood intense pressure from his colleagues all night long

and, by 5:00 A.M., looked like he had come out of a torture chamber. He held firm, however.

Nothing, though, compares to the disgusting behavior of the Republican leadership toward Michigan's Nick Smith. Smith is retiring from the House, and his son, Brad, is running in a crowded field to succeed him. The leadership first offered Smith unbelievable enticements to change his vote. They said that the leadership would take the unusual step of endorsing his son Brad in the tight primary race. Then, they promised to raise \$100,000 for Brad if Smith voted "yes." He still said no. Then, several Republican leaders threatened that, if he did not change his vote, they would raise money for his son's opponents. At this point, Nick's wife called her son to tell him of the situation. Brad Smith phoned his dad and heroically told him to vote his conscience and not to worry about the House race. Smith stuck to his guns. Several infuriated Republicans in the House were still fuming after the vote and taunted Nick Smith with threats that "we will make sure your son never wins this seat."

Another hero was Scott Garrett, who was told by the Republican leadership that he was committing political suicide by voting "no." When I asked him a few hours before the vote what he was going to do, however, he said, "I am for freedom." He was the only House Republican from the Northeast to vote "no."

By 5:00 A.M., many members were starting to suffer from sleep deprivation. Incredibly, the bill was going down to defeat, still stuck at 216-218. The vote count on the board had not moved in nearly an hour. According to the *Washington Post*, on several occasions, House Majority Leader Tom Delay was ready to throw in the towel. Each time, he was urged by the White House to hold off a little longer.

Then, the White House and the whip team tried one more desperation tactic. They went to two Western-state members, Trent Franks and Butch Otter, and told them that, if they did not change their votes, the President would immediately instruct the House leadership to pass the Democratic version of the bill. They were told that they were the only ones preventing passage of an even worse Medicare drug bill. I am convinced that the White House was bluffing and that this was simply another scheme to peel off votes. We will never know, however,

because Franks and Otter changed their votes, and the bill passed 220-215, as two other lawmakers decided to be on the prevailing side.

"I went to college at the Citadel, and so I have lived through the hazing process," said Gresham Barrett, another "no" vote. "But the barrage of attacks we absorbed from our own colleagues during those three hours was much worse."

If we could have won this vote against the most powerful whip operation in the history of the House and a popular Republican President, it would have proved to the Republican establishment that conservatives are sick of the spending splurge that is going on in Washington. The budget has grown by 27 percent in two years, a faster rate of growth than at anytime since Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency. Republican leaders in the White House and Congress seem entirely unconcerned about the orgy of spending and debt.

This was a hollow victory for the Republican Party bosses, and it could blow up in the Republicans' faces when seniors see the details of the bill. Worse, it threatens to demoralize fiscal conservatives who are infuriated by the GOP's massive expansion of government.

Today, we have two big-government parties in Washington. And we only have about two-dozen Republicans in the House and a handful in the Senate who are trying to pull the Republicans in an anti-big-government direction. We intend to make it a top priority of the Club to protect the heroes who voted against this bill from the retribution of the Republican Party. If party leaders run primary challengers against these principled congressmen, we will do everything we can to crush the challenge and to protect those true fiscal conservatives who voted for principle over politics during the wee hours of that Saturday morning.

Stephen Moore is the President of Club for Growth Advocacy. A version of this article first appeared in the December 3-9, 2003, issue of Human Events.

MOVING?

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CHRONICLES

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Secret Sharers

Magisterial sea yarner Patrick O'Brian comes to the screen in Peter Weir's new film, *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*. This is the tale of an early-19-century English frigate's mad chase after an enemy ship sailing from Brazil to the Galapagos Islands by way of Cape Horn. In visualizing this adventure, Weir has given us a gorgeous lesson in his medium's resources, filling the screen with vast on-location vistas, faithfully reproducing daily shipboard life in all its particulars, and staging utterly convincing battle scenes. Not that you are aware of this as you watch the movie. It is essential to Weir's art that his efforts remain hidden. Even when he deploys special effects, including computer-generated typhoons, the technical legerdemain is quite unnoticeable. Everything has been designed to pull you into the world of 1805 on a 28-gun warship plying its bloody trade on seas that "have become battlefields," as the voice-over introduction tells us. Surrender to Weir's recreation, and you will enter into the hearts and minds of men who lived 200 years ago.

After an opening shot of the ocean at dawn to establish that we are in the South Atlantic off Brazil, Weir's camera plunges into the cramped quarters belowdecks of the warship *Surprise*, commanded by Capt. Jack Aubrey. We are pressed up against the crew's "197 souls," a considerable portion of whom will soon be forever liberated from their professional confinement. We watch these rough, weathered men wake at the first bell, slip from their hammocks, and go on deck, where they find two upper-class midshipmen trying unsuccessfully to pierce a heavy morning fog with a telescope. One asks the older fellow, Hollom, if he sees anything. Unsure, Hollom stands confused in the middle of the milling crew, who murmur at his lack of resolution. Is it the enemy? Should he wake the captain? He hesitates when decision is needed, and, finally, the younger man takes the initiative, calling the captain from his cabin. Hollom's uncertainty introduces a theme dear to Joseph Conrad, especially in "The Secret Sharer." Two men arrive at the point of decision. One is paralyzed by doubt; the

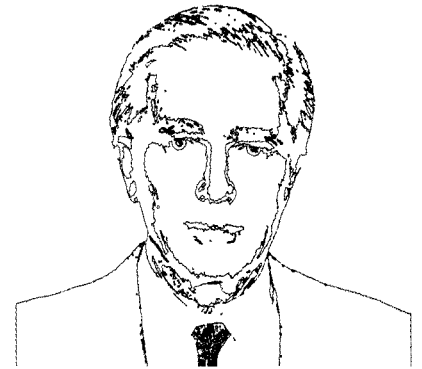
other, propelled by duty. It will be a moment echoed again and again in the narrative, especially in Aubrey's relation with his own secret sharer, Stephen Maturin, the ship's surgeon and his closest friend.

Like Conrad's nameless narrator in "The Secret Sharer," Maturin is a thoughtful man. As a medical doctor and naturalist, he has a skeptical, questioning turn of mind. He refuses to accept things as they are. He is prone to reflection, a mental habit Conrad deemed pernicious to spontaneous initiative, however necessary it may be to intellectual analysis. Aubrey, on the other hand, recalls Leggatt, the narrator's inverted double in Conrad's story. He is so fully at home in his world that he rarely hesitates in making decisions, nor does he worry about their consequences. Paul Bettany plays Maturin, giving him a reflective inwardness in the way he stands to the side of others watching them, not fully joining in their repartee. As Aubrey, Russell Crowe is a study in hearty self-assurance. His softly growling voice resonates with natural authority, whether he is giving a command to flog an insubordinate sailor or telling an anecdote about Lord Nelson. He is a man who expects to be heeded, and others are quite willing to accommodate him. His behavior exhibits the marks of an effective captain as Conrad's narrator describes them:

there are . . . certain words, gestures, that should in given conditions come as naturally, as instinctively as the winking of a menaced eye. A certain order should spring on to his lips without thinking; a certain sign should get itself made, so to speak, without reflection.

This is Jack, a man in whom there is only the briefest interval between thought and act. This is what makes him so masterful and so liked. His spontaneity inspires his crew with confidence, just as Hollom's hesitation infects them with misgivings.

This, however, is only the public Aubrey. Privately, he is something different. When the French privateer *Acheron* blasts the side out of the *Surprise*, he barely keeps her afloat. Inwardly shak-



Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World

Produced and distributed
by 20th Century Fox

Directed by Peter Weir

Screenplay by Peter Weir and John
Collee from Patrick O'Brian's novels

The Last Samurai

Produced and distributed by Warner
Bros. and Cruise-Wagner Productions

Directed by Edward Zwick

Screenplay by John Logan

en, he goes to Maturin to reflect on his efforts while they play Bach and Mozart duets in his cabin. Their choice of instruments is telling: Aubrey plays the violin with sprightly, headlong energy, while Maturin accompanies him on the cello in deep, reflective tones. Although not as absolutely drawn as are Conrad's, the characters represent differing tendencies and need one another to achieve moral equilibrium. There is a wonderfully comic scene that makes this point. In a battle, Maturin takes a musket shot in his side, and the ball must be removed before sepsis sets in. As the ship's surgeon, he decides to do it himself, probing his wound with the aid of a mirror. Aubrey stands by to give his friend moral support, but, to Maturin's amusement, he grows increasingly uncomfortable as the operation proceeds and, finally, must look away. This is the captain who has watched men die and ordered others flogged, yet a bit of self-surgery can make him queasy. Of course, poking into one's interior would naturally unnerve so extroverted a man.

At the beginning of *Youth*, Conrad's favorite narrator Marlow observes that "there are those voyages that seem ordered for the illustration of life, that might stand for a symbol of existence." In Con-

rad's tales, the illustration of life is to be found by confronting the other in oneself. Each of his characters either succeeds or fails to gain self-understanding through the agency of another person who harbors unsettling aspects of himself. O'Brian's story uses a similar strategy. Aubrey and Maturin discover their secret sharers in each other. In so doing, they achieve a balance of thought and will necessary to accomplish their missions: Aubrey, to win honor in combat; Maturin, to win scientific knowledge. In the film's most remarkable sequence, the *Surprise* stops at the Galapagos, where Maturin's research into the islands' strange beasts sets him wondering in a manner that anticipates Charles Darwin's speculations by 30 years. At first, Aubrey is unimpressed. He is wholly incurious about anything outside the range of the world as he has come to know it. He derisively tells Maturin, "Name a shrub after me; something prickly and impossible to eradicate." When Maturin shows him a self-disguising walking stick insect, however, Aubrey is unexpectedly and providentially inspired. He instantly hits upon the strategy he needs to take on the larger, more heavily armed *Acheron* and declares, "I intend to study nature from now on." And so intellectual inquiry and heroic deeds happily come together.

A number of O'Brian fans have knocked the film for departing from the original texts—*Master and Commander*, the first of the Aubrey-Maturin series of 20 volumes, and *The Far Side of the World*, the tenth. The loudest complaint has been that Weir has moved the story back to the Napoleonic era so that he could change the enemy ship from American to French and, thus, provide a more politically pleasing *contretemps*. This alteration was undoubtedly political, but it was also commercial. The film cost \$135 million to make. One can understand why its financial backers may have feared affronting one of its largest markets. Whatever the motivation, "Acheron" fits the story quite well: It is the name of one of the five rivers to Hades. In good Conradian fashion, this is a tale about descending into the private underworld that lies beneath the public self. We can also take solace in the ending's ambiguity. It begs for a sequel that, we can hope, will come closer to O'Brian's narrative. Of course, this assumes that *Master* prospers at the box office. Right now, it is faltering in America, where it is being driven out of the multiplexes by such films as *The Last*

Samurai, a development that may prove the people behind *Master* have naively mistaken its audience's whims.

With *Samurai*, director Edward Zwick assumes Americans love nothing better than to be kicked about for their manifold transgressions, and his film's popularity seems to be proving him both politically and economically correct. Zwick wants us to believe that late-19-century white middle-class citizens of the U.S. of A. were culpably unaware that their government had plotted genocide against the Indians.

The story begins in 1876 with a washed-up U.S. cavalry officer, Nathan Algren (Tom Cruise), a Civil War veteran who went on to become a renowned Indian killer. Although Algren has become a self-loathing alcoholic for his innumerable crimes against the invariably innocent Indians, his former colonel nevertheless recruits him to go to Japan to help the emperor modernize his army. Soon, he is teaching conscripted peasants how to shoot rifles so they can defeat samurai warriors who oppose the industrialization of their nation. When he is forced to lead a campaign with poorly trained troops against a band of seasoned samurai, his soldiers are massacred. He, however, is spared when the samurai leader, Katsumoto (Ken Watanabe), witnesses his extraordinary valor. He is taken back to Katsumoto's village where he learns the Way of the Samurai—which, needless to say, is unswervingly honorable compared to the foul Way of the Gaijin.

Smitten with the samurai, Algren changes sides and takes up the sword to fight the emperor's dishonorable guns. In the film's climactic battle, he finds himself heroically combating the foe with Katsumoto, now his best buddy. In a brief lull

in the carnage, he tells the man who is about to become the last samurai about the Greek soldiers who held off the Persian hordes at Thermopylae. Impressed, Katsumoto asks what happened to those brave warriors. Algren replies, "Dead to the last one," and they smile at each other beatifically.

Except for its reflexive know-nothing anti-Americanism, *Samurai* is not really a bad film. It is just silly, like a Saturday-afternoon Gene Autrey serial made on an unlimited budget. The scenery is terrific; the battle scenes, energetic; the acting, more than passable. Although Cruise is given to boyish posturing, he handles the action scenes with athletic aplomb. As the heroic, stoic Katsumoto, Watanabe wears his samurai gravitas lightly, making you believe that he is not kidding when he points to a cherry tree and says to Algren, "Like these blossoms, we are all dying; take life in every breath." Wow. That's, like, so existential.

With all of its idealizing of swordsmanship, *Samurai* might lead you to believe that it is the fever dream of an anti-NRA lobbyist. As it turns out, the film has an historical basis. Katsumoto is based on a samurai warrior named Saigo Takamori who fell into disfavor when he tried to halt the Westernizing influences transforming Japan. In 1877, his opponents, including many gun-wielding samurai, lured him into a battle that cost him most of his followers and drove him to suicide. To prevent further insurgency, he was posthumously pardoned by the Meiji emperor, and statues were quickly erected in his name. His heroism undoubtedly inspired those future soldiers who would give us hell in the Pacific six decades later. Perhaps Zwick thinks they were all honorable warriors, too.



Blood of Deer and Patriots

The desert smelled like September, arid and dry. It was the familiar high-desert smell, the smell of harvesttime without a harvest, unless you called the last thin cutting taken from among the willows along the creek a harvest. In the dead season, all deserts smell alike. Nothing was missing from the Mesopotamian variety but the smell of cooking fires and bottled gas, fresh bread baking, and, behind it all, lying here and there in pockets like a ground mist, the faint, sharp scent of cordite.

Upstream a mile from the hay field, on the public side of the rancher's fence, a faded blue Ford pickup truck with two men in it stood parked a couple of hundred yards from where the creek had been bermed to make a watering tank for cattle. The truck was angled so that it faced across the creek and a line of webby cottonwood trees toward the high, treeless bluff on the far side of the watercourse. Though the bare hills, golden in the light of the falling sun, looked perfectly barren, the men in the truck continued to study them through field glasses. They had been sitting that way on the bench seat for nearly two hours, having reconnoitered the area on foot in the forepart of the afternoon.

"I never seen better habitat than this," Old Merle said. "Where else you suppose deer are going to find water for miles around that ain't within easy distance from the county road?"

Merle Baxter, Jr., took the binoculars away from his face and let them drop on their cord to chest level. "We should have come on sign by now," he told his father. "Could be we ought to try up in the mountains tomorrow."

Old Merle shook his head. "Them old-timer bucks won't budge off of a piece of ground the size of your fist, water or no water. They don't need new ideas to survive, and so they never get none. You're huntin' horns this year, ain't you?"

"I've spent the last two years hunting men. You don't guess I'm going to be satisfied with taking a raghorn, do you?"

"I guess you ain't. Looks like you're going to have to walk your butt off for something better, though. I know when I got home from Nam, I'd had enough

armed hiking to hold me for a good long while."

They sat on in the truck until the sun dropped below the landline that seemed low-down and level as the ocean horizon, and then Merle Jr. backed the Ford around in the sagebrush and drove off in low gear in the two-track, across the creek below the red clay berm and up from the valley by a tight and winding canyon in which the blue dusk was already rising. The pickup topped the bluff at the same moment a full moon showed in the east behind the Snowy Range, no bigger at first than auto lights topping the pass coming across from Centennial but swelling fast as it squeezed clear of the mountains to float orange and huge in a cobalt sky above the lights of Saratoga glimmering in the valley of the North Platte River.

"Did the moon look the same in Iraq like it does here?" Old Merle wanted to know.

"Pretty much, it did. Nothing ever looks the same from anywhere, exactly."

"That's how I remember it from Nam, too."

For convenience, camp was fixed midway between the desert floor and the high timbered country, on a downswept shoulder of the Sierra Madre facing across Spring Creek Canyon toward a series of ridges covered with buckbrush and sagebrush and running parallel to one another. For shelter, the men were using Merle Jr.'s six-man sidewall tent with a woodstove set inside it on wooden blocks and connected to a metal chimney going up through a hole in the canvas roof. Before he joined the Army, he'd packed it by horseback every year into the mountains to make a spike camp in hunting season, while his father, who feared and hated horses, raised a 25-man Army tent for himself and his union buddies from the mine for a permanent camp off-road in the valley down below. By the time they reached camp, the moon had soared above the fire lookout on Kennaday Peak; already, it was diminished in size, the red-orange disc paling toward silver.

While Old Merle prepared the fire pit and laid on tinder, Merle Jr. went in search of firewood with his rifle slung by



its military strap across his shoulder. His father had taught him as a boy that a good hunter is never separated from his rifle until he has filled his permit. Still, it was different now that he had returned from the Middle East. It wasn't nerves exactly, only that he noticed the slightest disturbance anytime he was in the field. The first day of the season, he'd found himself reaching for his gun at the sound of children's voices from the back of a pickup truck going by in the road. Now he stood holding an armload of wood he'd gathered from a small aspen stand when a flick of movement in his peripheral vision caused him to pivot fast on his left foot. It was an elk, a big bull with a heavy rack, grazing toward him along the forest edge at a range his infantryman's eye estimated at three-hundred-twenty-five yards. The bull never suspected he was there. From hunting human beings, Merle Jr. had become wiler than any wild animal, who, after all, could not shoot back.

He mentioned the bull to his father on his return to camp with the wood. "Of course," Old Merle said. "Deer season smells different to him than elk season does." But that, Merle Jr. thought, was only the bull's perspective. His own take on the situation was that timing, finally, had everything to do with success.

For supper, they had antelope hearts and cut potatoes fried together in the pan and black coffee with sugar. The moon was halfway up the sky as they ate, and the wind coming off the pass turned chill. When they had finished, Old Merle cleaned up while Merle Jr. went to the truck for the bucked logs they had brought from home, a warmer coat, and the whiskey bottle.

Seated by the campfire on folding chairs with their collars turned up against the wind and their gloves on, they drank whiskey from tin cups, moving the chairs

now and again when the wind fanned smoke in their faces. The fire held the camp within a nimbus of yellow light, its circumference intersecting the circle of silver moon overhead.

"I seen on the news where they bombed the airport at Baghdad," the older man said. "I'm glad you're out of that hell-hole, Merle."

"Listen to those coyotes," his son replied. "I wonder what got them going all of a sudden?"

"Hell, it don't take nothing to start a coyote singing. There ain't a thing in the world he likes better than the sound of his own voice."

They drank in silence for a while. Finally, Old Merle spoke again. "When I come back from Nam, there was plenty of soldiers wouldn't talk about the war on account of their being ashamed of having fought for their own country. You ain't that way, Merle. Are you?"

Merle Jr. didn't answer right away. It was true; he didn't like talking about the war. But that was because he didn't feel the need for it. Unlike the returning Vietnam vets, he didn't feel disoriented or tormented. He didn't *feel* anything particular at all. That wasn't to say he didn't come home with certain ideas, though.

"Merle, you ain't like that—are you?"

Merle Jr. supposed he might as well get it said now, as later.

"It isn't the same thing, you see," he said at last. "Your generation saw things from a different perspective than we did. Fighting in Vietnam, they felt guilt. Guilt at killing the enemy. No one I fought with in Iraq had any problem with doing his job. We were volunteers and career officers, after all. Killing was what we were paid to do. I never knew anyone who had the least bit of trouble with that. The men I knew who had nightmares over there had them on account of something else."

"And that was?"

"The responsibility we felt for helping stick the knife in the back of our own country. Like we were an army of Julius Caesars."

The moon stood directly above the camp now, diminished in size but so bright at the zenith that its light blanched the fire, which had subsided to a tripod of half-consumed logs standing above a bed of coals. Old Merle reached the bottle from under his chair and poured a finger of whiskey into each of the tin cups.

"I don't pretend to understand exactly what it is you're trying to tell me," he

said, "but you're a smart kid—you always were—so most likely the problem ain't you, but me. Like you say: A thing looks different according to where you happen to be looking at it from. Vietnam seems like only yesterday, but it ain't. I know that. It's a long, long time ago, now."

They locked the rifles away in the truck, damped the fire, and turned in, after placing their sidearms beneath their pillows. Merle Jr., who did not care for a sleeping pad under his bag, worked his hipbone into a depression in the ground and fell asleep at once. Toward morning, when the hard cold set in, he did not sleep so well, dreaming that he was back in Iraq. His dreams were not of resentful black eyes peering from burqas or urchins clutching grenades under their shirts. Instead, television sets fixed around the recreation hall were blaring programs from stateside. The voices were triumphant and loud, the faces flushed and self-congratulatory, and he was trying to argue with them. But the words wouldn't come right, the voices wouldn't quit, the blurred faces refused to go away, and so he gave it up finally, and awoke, frustrated and tense, to discover he'd been grinding his teeth again in his sleep. In the gray dawn, he shucked away the sleeping bag, pulled wool trousers and a wool sweater over his long johns, half-laced his boots, and went out into the cold to revive the coals in the fire pit and set the pot to boil for coffee.

After breakfast, the two Merles made the decision to hunt high for the day and see what they could do. Carrying the rifles under their arms, they crossed the road and walked together through buckbrush to the head of the canyon where they separated, Old Merle staying put while Merle Jr. climbed down through the brush into the drainage. He did not have the enthusiasm he ought to feel at the start of a day's hunt in prime deer country, after a hot breakfast of game liver and scrambled eggs with coffee. Perhaps it was getting older, he thought hopefully. He couldn't fool himself, though. The truth was, there were more important things in the world now than hunting deer.

When he was still a hundred and fifty yards above the creek bottom, Merle Jr. stopped and looked uphill to where his father stood watching in his orange hunting coat. Then he started forward again along a deer trail that traversed the canyon slope at an angle. The sun breached the eastern range as he went, flooding the vast country between him and the moun-

tains with its fast-rising light. The up-canyon wind was in his favor, but if a chance to shoot came anytime soon, he'd be aiming into the low-down sun, which was no good. In that case, perhaps he would let Old Merle, who'd have a downhill shot across the sun's rays, go first. Whatever the opportunity, Merle Jr. promised himself, he wasn't going to shoot anything less than a big four-point. His father never minded filling the freezer. He'd let him handle the job, since it gave the old man such pleasure.

Across canyon, seven deer—four does, two fawns, and one other, he couldn't tell what—were moving on the slope halfway between the creek and the ridgeline. He found them in the field glasses and followed them uphill for a way. He made it five does, before a filament of light gleamed briefly beside a pair of the big forward ears: a spike, maybe a forkhorn. Merle Jr. tucked the glasses into his coat front and glanced at his father trudging slowly against the slope above, out ahead a little and holding his rifle cradled with the barrel pointed uphill.

Alert as he was, the buck nearly caught him off guard. It came up out of the brush ahead like a marlin breaking water and kept on going, down and then up again, as though it were running on the tops of the bushes, its feet never touching the ground. It was a six-point, heavy bodied with a massive rack: a huge deer, one of the biggest Merle Jr. had ever seen. He brought the rifle up fast, found the deer in his sights, and led it. But then he did not squeeze the trigger.

Two shots came from above: Old Merle's old .264, a gun with an outsized and, to Merle Jr., obnoxious report. The buck was only yards now from an aspen stand ahead. It covered the distance in three or four bounds and vanished into the trees, just ahead of a spurt of dust raised by his father's final bullet.

"Why didn't you shoot him?" Old Merle shouted from uphill.

"My gun jammed!" Merle Jr. was about to shout back, but didn't. He could not tell a lie. He'd made his mind up that, next time he shot, it would be something really big. He wasn't sure, just yet, what that was going to be.



Sounding Brass

"Charity begins at home" was one of the most telling proverbs in the English language. I say "was" because the English language is deadlier than Latin, and its post-English/post-American replacement, while it contains sound sequences remarkably similar to the old words, *charity* and *home*, has put both words in bondage to liberal propaganda. *Home* is now used as a more seductive synonym for *house*: Real-estate salesmen never sell houses any more, only *homes*—which, by definition can neither be bought nor sold. *Home* once designated the semi-sacred spot where the family memories were kept; where children were born and reared and the old people died; where you could still see the pencil marks on the kitchen wall, charting the growth of each of the children; the place to which the prodigal son returned; "the place where, when you had to go there, they had to take you in." The substitution of *home* for *house*, however, accepted by the great mass of Americans, can only mean that we now regard a home to be a building purchased on a 30-year mortgage, where we consume, usually in separate rooms, the things we buy and hold on to, one of a series of way stations on the road to bigger and more expensive.

The degeneration of *charity* is even more complex. The most obvious corruption has been the reinterpretation of charity as the equivalent of almsgiving. Giving alms to the poor is often an expression of charity, though we may also give money out of fear or vanity or under compulsion. But charity, properly speaking, is *caritas*, a Latin word meaning dear-ness and, thus, affection and nonsensual love. Cicero and Livy spoke of our charity toward children and toward our country, and it was the word chosen to translate the Greek *agape* of the New Testament. The "charity" praised by St. Paul in First Corinthians does not primarily refer to the giving of gifts to the poor: It is more like a spiritualized version of Aristotelian *philia* (friendship) that rises ultimately to the love of God. Properly speaking, charity is, as Addison observed, not of the hands but of the heart.

Charity is said to begin at home because it is within the home that we learn

to treat other human beings with loving-kindness. Many parents, if they merely consulted their own immediate interests, might decide to send their children out to work, as Dickens' family sent the young Charles out to a blacking factory. A mother focused on her income and career might choose to kill her child before he is born or to emulate the inexperienced rabbit, who eats her offspring. (The difference is that most human mothers know what they are doing.)

Instead, most mothers and fathers sacrifice their material interests in order to help their children. Decent people will extend such kindness to other members of the family and to neighbors, and, if they are Christian, they will desire to help the poor people they encounter, provided that, in giving to the poor, they do not injure the interests of their own families. Saint Paul, Saint Augustine, and Saint Thomas all made it clear that Christians must not fall short of pagans in providing for their families, and, as Augustine points out, since few of us have infinite wealth, we should devote most of our scarce resources to the families we are obligated to take care of.

Thus, charity begins at home.

The confusion between charity and alms is old in English, and, by the 18th century, wits such as Sheridan were cracking the now-familiar joke that charity that begins at home "rarely stirs abroad at all." Classical liberals like Ebenezer Scrooge are opposed to all eleemosynary activity, partly in the belief (as Emerson puts it) that, if life and property are secure, "you need not give alms." Emerson (like all the Scrooges) misses the point as usual. One object of any equitable and efficient social order is to provide the conditions under which hardworking and independent people can thrive, but human life is filled with misfortunes. A good man might be too weak to prosper; a stranger might find himself without resources; decent people get sick and cannot feed their families. And, since none of us is perfect, we are obliged to consider the fate of the not-so-virtuous and not-so-decent people who fall on hard times. Christians do not exercise charity in the hope that they can solve all human prob-

lems but in fulfillment of the two Great Commandments: to love God and to love their neighbors.

This is what distinguishes the Christian ethic from the Marxist system that automatically transfers wealth from my family to another's, from my neighborhood to yours, from our country to some place most of us will never visit. This compulsory almsgiving robs me not only of my property in general but, in particular, of that bit of surplus income I can spend on the poor and the unfortunate. A family man who is forced to give half his income to bureaucrats has less to give and less incentive to give. Charity given under compulsion is not charity at all but tribute, a tribute paid to a political system that despises the very religion that has preached charity for two millennia.

The national welfare state replaces charity with a socialist theory of justice that no Christian can accept and no rational person could believe in. (The widespread acceptance of theories of "social justice"—debunked brilliantly in our own time by Anthony Flew—are proof that man is not really a rational animal.) The international welfare state, which is being created by the United Nations and the NGO's, fulfills Marx's diabolical dream of a global regime in which a planetary proletariat serves the tiny master class that controls the state. <c

LIBERAL ARTS

AKI HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

"Thousands of fans rioted at Sierra Leone's national stadium Saturday when authorities substituted two local dwarf comedians for a widely anticipated out-of-town midget duo. Police arrested 30 people, amid damage and dozens of injuries.

"Daylong radio ads had whipped up excitement and ticket sales for Friday night's scheduled performance by the two Nigerian entertainers, Aki and Paw Paw."

—from "Riot in Sierra Leone Over Midget No-Show" by Clarence Roy Macaulay, the Washington Post, December 6, 2003

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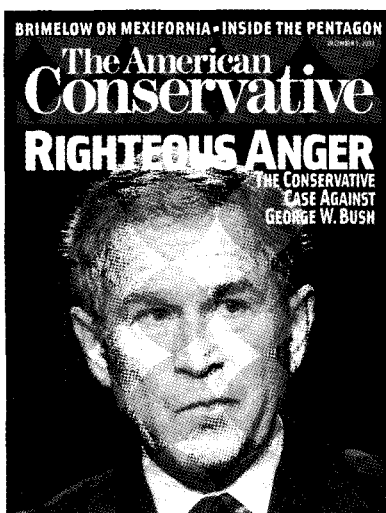
REMEMBER WHEN?

- Nations that were our friends stood by us — and knew we'd stand by them
- An American manufacturing job meant something
- Saying someone "acted like a Christian" was a compliment
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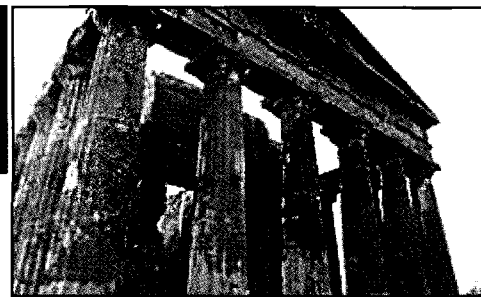
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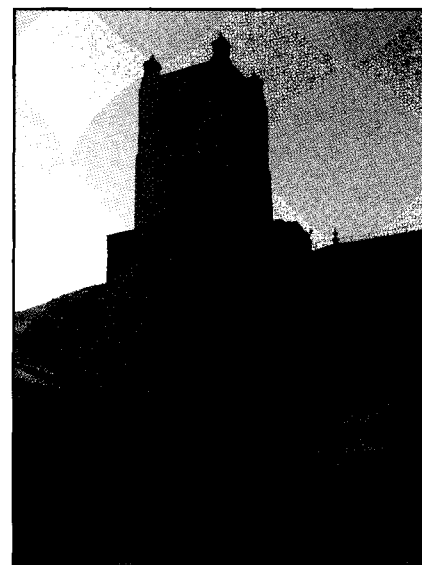
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